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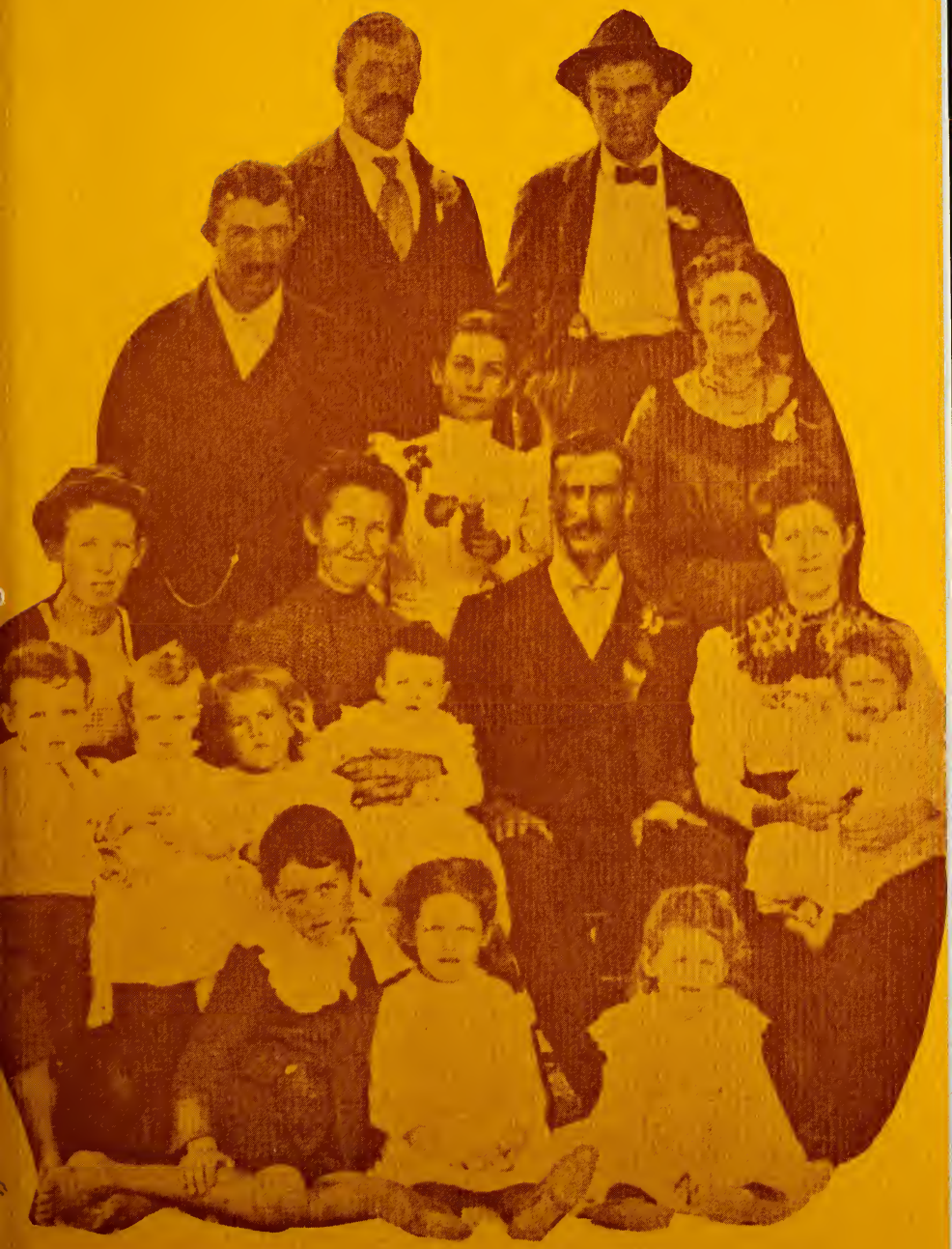
JOURNAL



JOURNAL

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for the folks at home

FRIDAY –
TO ALL STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Friday comes but once a year,
But when it does
It brings good cheer.

Philip Stanhope Sheffield Covington

DAMN TOILET!

Folks, I don't know if you've ever felt it, or if you can understand how I feel, but I'm in a good mood. I'm in my apartment now, sitting on the commode if the truth be known. There's nothing quite as relaxing as just sitting here on the commode and letting your natural functions function and enjoying simple enjoyments. It's such a nice way in which to become involved with nature.

I went to this party tonight, you see, and met some real nice sort of females. Well, this one body full of feminine charm and I begin to converse and get real friendly. She was real nice; as fine as any girl in the place. She didn't have to be ashamed of herself. No sirree, and she was real tidy and proper too, which makes me feel real big about what makes me feel so good.

Which is why I'm in here in this bathroom preparing myself, making sure I'm clean and comfortable and all, because this fine female friend I found has invited me to stay with her this weekend. I know I said she was proper and tidy, but her parents left suddenly out of town and left her in their apartment all alone and all. She said she wanted me to keep her company and she was a little afraid to stay by herself. Of course, she might have been a little overwhelmed by me.

Well, I guess its time to go. I hate to leave you folks, but that's the way it . . . I got an idea. You don't look like you have anything else to do and I haven't ever done anything like this before and she seemed rather high class and formal, so's I'd like some company. I'll bring you with me. I know you can't hear what's going on, so I'll keep you informed.

I'll go down and get a cab. Yeah, there's one. Well, I'm in the cab and I've told the driver her address. I guess I could have taken my little 1954 Volkswagen, but it don't run too good and it may become cumberson if we go somewhere and there may not be anywhere to park at this place. Well the driver's stopped, but I don't understand why. He's telling me to get out so.I guess I will. I'll be. The street's right, yeah, and the number's around here somewhere. Oh there is is, across the street, but that's the – Holy Mackerel! That's the name she mentioned! Wow! I'd tell you what it was, but it's French and has little lines I don't know how to make.

I'm going in now . . . I feel kind of ridiculous in this fancy place; it's a good thing I wore my good corduroy's or I.d be out of place. "Oh, excuse me sir." I just bumped into a man that's running around kind of funny, not even moving his legs. I wonder how he does that. "Oh, excuse me again sir." I think he ran into me that time. I was just standing there. People seem to have noticed me and this gentleman. Uh, oh, here he comes again–

Man, I just don't understand people. There I was being attacked by this stranger and I'm dodging him and they're sitting there laughing. How was I supposed to know he was a statue. I ain't never seen anything like it. I'm just glad I made it into this elevator here. I guess I'll go to her apartment. I'll ask this lady in here which floor it is upon.

Well how about that. All the way to the top. I guess I have to go. That sure is a long way's up; or, mercy, down. Here goes nothing. Hey, hey, this thing's fast. A person could get sick on this thing.

Here we are, on the top floor. This isn't anything like what I expected. There's the door. I've rung the bell already. There she is and, oh my goodness, I think my legs are going to fall down underneath me. She ain't hardly got nothing on! She's inviting me in and leading me into a real cozy room with a bed in it. She's playing with my shirt buttons and sticking her little lips right up at me! Oh my goodness, I think my heart's so high in my throat my windpipe's going to be cut off! I gotta do something quick. "Oh, excuse me. I have to go to the bathroom!" She's taking off her clothes! And chasing me to the bathroom! Oh no! Come on legs. Made it! Lock that door, yeah.

Man-o-man, what am I going to do? I guess I better sound like I'm using her bathroom here. Well, there's something them rich and us poor both have, toilets. Which reminds me, I could make actual use of that thing.

I'd better be sure on how to use it first. I'd hate to be stuck in here and having to ask how to use this fancy contraption. There's nothing quite like a commode to make a body feel at home. Let's see, this must be the flusher:

"Tchawoosh-zsweet."

Hey, it works pretty good; fast too. I mean most toilets give a kind of slower 'tchawoosh" to let the water out and then a long, drawn-out "gurgle gurglegurglegurgle" to let the water in, and maybe a satisfying little "(h)oowee" to end up. Let me hear this fancy one again.

"Tchawoosh-zsweet."

The same thing. This gadget is efficient-like. I bet it can go again quickly too.

"Tchawoosh-zsweet, tchawoosh-zsweet."

Hm.

"Tchawoosh-zsweet, tchawoosh-zsweet, tchawoosh-zsweet, tchawoosh-z sweet."

It don't matter how fast I flush, it always come back, just asking for more. I wonder why anyone would want something like this. You couldn't relax on it. You'd feel like you'd have to rush and flush it or it'd just laugh at you.

"Look, toilet. Couldn't you just have a nice slow 'tcha-woosh' to make me comfortable? I mean things have happened to me today like I haven't ever seen and I just want a nice slow 'tch-woosha' to make me calm down a bit. I mean, would it hurt so much? Well, I'm going to try you again and . . . please have a little feeling for me."

"Tchawoosh-zsweet . . . Tchawoosh-zsweet, tchawoosh-zsweet, tchawoosh-zsweet . . ."

Well folks, I guess I pushed that little button which took the place of a flush-handle fifty times, and that damn toilet just sat there and worked perfectly every time. I mean, it just isn't fair. Everything is trying to scare me and the one thing that normally can be relied on to be nice and simple and soothing was complicated, unnerving, and downright mean. I just can't take any more, folks. I've unlocked the door, expecting to have to fight off that girl – but she's moaning and all on the bed – all by herself – and she is unclothed – naked – and I've never seen those parts of a woman before. Quick, out the door.

Boy, fifty-eight flights of stairs is no easy jog. I'm in this alley with the strongest urge to go to the bathroom. It's kind of funny, me spending that time up with that fancy toilet and not even going to the bathroom but that thing just put me right out of the mood.

Well, I'm seeing this nice little lady coming out of a door. I'll ask her if I could use her toilet.

"Lady, could I use your . . . Lady!"

Well she's disappeared, but here's her door. Maybe somebody still there will let me in. I'm a-knocking and somebody's opening the door. It's a nice looking young woman, about my age. And I'm saying:

"Excuse me, ma'am, but I'm in a fix; so, could I use your bathroom?"

And she's saying, "Yes, sir, follow me, please."

She's left me now in the little bathroom. It's pretty rundown looking. Now it's clean and all, but just looks old, kind of used. I'm just sitting here on the commode and relaxing.

Ahh. Now this is comfortable. I can just feel my heartbeat slowing down. If I don't be careful, I could go to sleep here.

I've finished now, so I guess I'll flush this little jewel.

"Tchawoosh-gurglegurglegurglegurgle . . ."

Uh, oh. This thing ain't stopping. I'm taking the top off and looking to see if the float's stuck. That's usually what the trouble is.

Now I know this is changing the subject, but now that it's on my mind, I might as well tell you. I can't help but overhear what's being said in the next apartment. A little boy asked for permission to do something, I couldn't tell what; and his father was closer to me, says, "As long as you don't walk on the walls." I couldn't figure it out myself and thought maybe one of you could. I just remember that when I was a kid, no one ever had to tell me not to walk on the walls. It presented too many problems, even if I had thought about it, which I wouldn't have. I guess that's the difference between my generation and the next one coming up; you gotta tell 'em not to walk on the walls.

Well, anyway, it wasn't the float, so I guess I'll have to go into the subject a little deeper. That nice looking girl who let me in is asking if I'm having any problems and I'm telling her that I don't seem able to turn the thing off. She says that that happens a lot and that she knows how to fix it. So I left her in and we work on it together for about ten minutes and finally get it fixed and all. She's a real nice sort. I was sitting there talking to her just like I'd known her for a long time. Nice looking too. Not that she'd win any beauty contests, but she sure does soothe my nerves.

I guess I look kind of tired and worn out because she's offering to let me rest on the sofa. It's a real nice sofa, and a real nice girl, and a cozy little apartment. I'm lyin' down on the sofa, and she's comin' . . . and sittin' down and lettin' me put my head in her lap, and she's leanin' over and kissing me on the forehead, and I think I'm going to go to sleep.

FALL

Fall: comes suddenly
And leaves blow:
    like jewels across Saharan sand.
Winds bend birch twigs,
    shaking them
    like waist-length hair.
Cattails wag stiffly,
    purring
    in the rocking chair wind.
Dewdrops are captured
    by silken cobwebs:
    matted to display.

BLUE STEEL

When you are on the road
and the world is blurring by
and you chance to see a tree in a field . . .
        that's me
planted where I am with leaves and limbs
that stretch
            in reach of the traveling winds
            as you blow across the land
And the thing is like those nests in the trees
that like I are
            empty when their owners are away
            and impatiently (trying not to look it)
            waiting for their return
When you are on the road
and there's music in the sky
and you chance to catch a blue note in steel . . .
    that's me

THE SLEEPING NUDE

The shaded room, the sleeping nude, go green, then blue.
Outside, the tall and salty trees prepare to cheer.
Sloe-eyed, and slow, the touted mountain storm comes on.

The sleeping nude's been sleeping nude since half past noon.
And I, in swimming suit, have swum the room since one,
The shaded room wherein the nude goes green, then blue.

Asprawl, awry — she might have fallen miles; lies prone;
Might well explode in well-wrought flame, or simply melt.
(Just so, sloe-eyed, the touted mountain storm comes on.)

She means to mount a bike — decides to swim — takes flight.
With every subtle shift, her body seems reborn,
As in that shaded room it goes now green, now blue.

Her fast and shining sleep, kaleidoscoping lust,
Conjures up configurations that could blind,
Considering how slow the sloe-eyed storm comes on.

In time — in view — a sizzling tree is sliced in two:
The shaded room, the waking nude, go green, then blue;
And slates of sky collapse. I watch the lady yawn.
The touted mountain storm, wide-eyed, is on the lawn.

FROM THE CEREAL BOWL

I was sitting at the table when I thought of her
maybe it was the smooth look of the milk in my cereal
or maybe it was the feel of the wet spoon at my lips
But I think it was mainly just her
My mind works like a compass needle
it always points north
that's where she is
When my mind wanders around it always head back in
her direction
it's warm where she is.

TO THE TREE, with GRITS

Remember . . .
The Tree, with its big black ants.
Its leaves falling softly
Constantly reminding of the nothingness
of the cycle.

Sweetthings . . .
The Tree, not love . . . yet Love.
Full of life, bouncing away,
Hints softly falling,
Strength crawling at its roots.
Somethingness.

The Tree will love you
with all its grits
as you love it.

JEWESS

Jewess with gentle thighs
Receives me, not a surmise
In her manner, only calm,
As I rub her in balm.
We move in spasmic grace
Appeasing aching space,
Supine and prone, all joined
In lips and breasts and loins.
We ask of the issue
Imbued of what virtues,
Shall it be circumcised
Or from a font baptized?
Weary of wonder, again
We come together, pain
One another and thrust,
Inured to mundane musts.

A PROMISE

virgin sheets on virgins beds
  what they want they get instead
of what they need the souls succor
  not available through unclean lucre
legs outspread and hair awry
  a vacancy unfilled between the thighs
but promise remains to be accomplished
  by doughty lad or men of promise
sleep often remains just sleep
  without dreams oer which to weep
because they give what life denies
  interludes of stroke drawn sighs
nude and not so nude they quiver
  like vagrants forced to camp near rivers
the only fires to warm their limbs
  derive from chants and not from hymns

on the bike passing houses
leaves on Kitchen floors

deep moss between stones
speaks to me in the shade

if the stones speak
it will be quietly

A GIMMY

As I drove up on the gravel I noticed an unappetizing hue around the cafe. Through the fog, the light from my truck barely hit the front porch. And as I got out, the cold seemed to embrace me. But I forgot the chill of the night when I saw Katie, crumpled on the steps. Her long brown hair flowed over her face like a waterfall.

As I moved closer, I heard a whimpering sound. I called out to her. As her head popped up I noticed tears streaming down her face. I ran to her side and inquired on her upset. She was hysterical.

'It was about half past twelve and he walked in.'

I interrupted, 'Who Katie?'

'Don't know' she said 'but he blew Johnny's head off and went on to kill everyone else.'

It was true. As I entered the cafe blood was to be seen everywhere. As I looked behind the counter, I saw Johnny's head. That was all, just his head. It seemed to be looking up at me saying, 'Hi Dave. Cup of coffee?'

INHIBITIONS LOSE THEIR TEETH

the two acquitted murderers
and the one unhallowed saint
receive from pilgrims homage
like warriors without paint
they look ashamed out of cages
and smile like olympic hurdlers
once the libation flows like blood
and inhibitions lose their teeth
the gods awake within them all
their shouts redound throughout the heath
too loud to hide the thud as falls
from rusty spikes one from the road.
the scene attracts hoboes and priests
who join for different reasons
the one to eat the next to save
they're dressed for roles not seasons
and go from there to feats and caves
waiting for trains and moveable feasts

PROVIDENCE

Be like a bird
who, halting, in his flight
        upon a branch too slight,
Feels it give way beneath him
Yet sings
Knowing he has wings.

OVERWHELMED BY CREATION

O' how I love the growing things
  that sprout both high and low
O'er hill and dale, undertree
  flower unyielding to the foe

O' how I love the flowering grass
  that high in the meadow grows
Bending as with jointed knees
  eve as on the high winds blow

O' how I love the long high weed
  rushing to the sky
The most magnificent of these
  the thin and slender rye

O' how I love the prickly cactus
  rising slowly in hot sands
Sleeping softly is its fire
  til touched by human hands

O' how I love the lovely mushroom
  trailing up from underground
Its beauty is deceiving
  until its power is found

O' how my mind comes cloudy
  with beauty of this world
When lying on this mountaintop
  oh, how my thoughts are hurled

JUS CUNTRY'S CAN BE

or

THE WILBURN BROTHERS GOT NUTHIN ON ME

YEEHAAAA
i luv it
pass me anuther glass o' that snug juice baby
i'm ridin high to-nite
an ain't this some kind o' good clean fun
don't mean to start no fight
show up all them ho-down dudes
in rodeo shirts an fancy shoes
rodeo eats is a can o' beer an a barbeekew samwich
ain'it thu truth baby
me on my city born cuntry woman
could jus' ride for days-at-a-time
i mean years
on them cuntry'sn'western muzik stations
specially when we do it ourselves
hey now — let's pick anuthern
while i still got feelin' in m' fangers
whoooeee, here i go,
i dreamed in hillbilly heavun
i wuz thaire
(jus like Tex Ritter)
an all
the . . .sumpthins . . .wuz thaire
i cain't r'member thu words buti don't caire
gimme anuther glass o' that stuff baby
an fix me anuther barbeekew samwich
i'm ridin high too-nite
wooopeeeee

ONCE UPON A DREAM

For quite some time now I have been contemplating just how truthful and selffulfilling the dream was. I arose from my deep slumber and found the dream was not one as such, but a step beyond. A reality. Here is how it started.

We decided the love we shared for each other was only part of what we needed. There were occasional bickering and squabbles that should have been avoided. True love in its essence is built on mutual understanding and adoration of each others shortcomings. We did not know this. We used our faults as grievances. I am as guilty as you and do not lay all the responsibility on you. Now as I look back upon those precious and glorious days, I am filled with remembrances.

I could not have loved you any more or truer. But now since we meet again, the love of a year ago has stretched through the summer. I will not try to win you back with sweet words of flattery, but rather bring forth those emotions that are rooted in the bottom of my heart.

Love is not all that is required for a relationship. Rationale, understanding and forgiveness come before love. A relationship built only on love cannot stand the tests of time. Ours has been tested. It has failed. I will hate to lose you. I will neither forget you nor discontinue loving you. But, on the morrow, I will forget the love that failed. No matter how I torment myself chancing that I might rekindle our lost love, I know that can never be. It would be too much like dreaming upon a star and awakening to realize that the star was not really there. Not there, no matter how much you convince yourself that now, upon awakening, the one you see when you gaze overhead into the heavens, is surely the dream star.

This will be how I will remember you. I accept this delimma, not so much as failure, but as incompatability previously ordained.

If I should die tomorrow, I would have the satisfaction in death of knowing that before I am laid to rest, you would know I did try to reach the impossible star of your life. Did not fail in my attempt because I know I found some compassion. Success and failure as you know is personally measured.

Rather, I would breathe a sign of relief convincing myself that you surmise how much it really matters to me, or how much it hurts the dreamer to wake up from a pleasant and happy slumber to find it just didn't happen that way at all. . . . . it just didn't.

6 O'CLOCK

acidic news reels
gnaw
the tough of my sole
        tho' tromp the festering pictures
        of lust and loss
        I do,

holes betray my calloused guards
and send me screaming,
crudely oozing corrupt innuendos –

relief for decay?
no
        the fisted blacks and shifty browns
        and gooky reds are not reknowned
for talk!

And so I sit before my set
a teeming lump of disgust

a victim of circumstance.

SHOTGUN

All night long from North Carolina
sleet stuttered on the windshield
like marbles spat by angels.

Somewhere south of Louisville
I dreamed the car
was filling up with popcorn.

Just as I awoke
Fred Astaire jumped off the hood
into the Wabash.

AFTER NOON

the circle's run
and I have lost
not the contest
but the prize

Morning trips on
but drops me here
to see and feel
the after noon.
To see night's tide
Come rushing quickly,
silently swirling my hopes along.
To feel grey days
and people black clay
pound
her
sound
on my dying heart.

(notes revived for mellowed ears)

THE BLIND JOURNEYMAN

Although the sky glows with a luminous blue,
The world appears obscure and murky.
Natural color and sound dissolve into nothingness;
Leaving a reminiscent, but lethal skeleton.

The inhabitants constantly search for their bearing.
Evidently, the compasses are toys;
The necessary tool is a pointless point,
Lying upon a remote partitition of the inner.

Alas, blood will not propagate an eternity;
Is death the sole route to the concise?
Few even realize this inescapable turnpike,
Wrecking their ghosts on an endless exit.

AMERICA: IN 4 MOVEMENTS

I

off main street
the whores
walk—
varicose veins
lining their legs like roadmaps.
Walking. Down beer alleys
sewn with rust cans.

Old men
in bicycle shops
across the street
are wishing they were young again
wishing the whores weren't so old and,
their wives were younger—
and their own lives
weren't so wasted.

And the whores grow old
waiting in beer-on-tap-bars
selling themselves
and their roadmap legs
that tell about the
dead-ends
deep-ends
and no end
times they've gone down

II

Wrinkled-lace — handkerchief women
sit together — a menagerie in themselves.
They've seen their best days
float past in double-standard Sanpans
and missed them for the fear of
what proper ladies would do.

Now wilting like dried ferns
having less to reflect on
than pressed roses.

"We aren't old, and yet
why do things pass by so quickly?"

III

I've seen sunrises from the Blue Ridge Mountains
and drunk stream water in Pisgah Forest,
praying pollution would remain in idea.
But ideas are hardest to combat.

Back in my room I've remembered
North Carolina sky-ceilings
and counted the stars in my head—
only to be alarmed
by a machine.
Who's the boss here anyway?

And I have stumbled through days with no respite
from the piped-in sewer music in drug stores,
mimicked on TV's made nauseous
seeing beefy gravy dogfood.

IV

This strange barroom verse has been for you
America.
You whose people buy anything,
even hamburger patriotism.
You whose children are dying embers.
You are a fickle lover
America. And your people jealous husbands.
But adultery is corrupt.

Stop — slowdown to live and breathe.
The breath you take could be your neighbor's.
Yes, yes, we have all tried.

I heard the '72 Democratic convention
"Come home, America, come home!"

The words sound strangely circular.
Don't blow it, America –
you've still the tallest tree in the forest.

'Come home, Come home.'
Stop playing the prodigal son,
I'm crying to you don't!

Become, America,
Become

ODE ON JEAN

It may be as it seems, or it
may be backwords.
Without her I am lost, but she
is movement without course.
She brings memories of a shared
moment –
The coconut head pipes my approval
as he surveys the memory-dressed bottle.
A hundred letters attack my unhappiness –
my fear of being alone.
I need her, but more important:
These words must tell her what
Mickey Mouse told me –
I love you.

BIRDBLESSIN

Perched full-feathered in the timely trees
        among the oppulence (or corpulence)
Wait those who never look beyond their airborne beaks
Who flying high above the rabble rest
Make some grandstandawardwinning plays so that
Everyone will (maybe) know and remember them

Sweetly soaring they sometimes swoop
        To grace our homage-hung heads
        To drop upon us their blessings

Blessings are addictive sometimes
Like when you want to escape the scrape
And scream in the sensuous dream

There should be a strong arm
To sweep the kites from the air
And (without use of republical cord)
Pull us to a different nexting place
        Taller trees and greener leaves

flap flap flap wings streak
clap clap clap mouths speak
slap slap slap souls shreik in time to gumbeat
sleep sleep sleep we can dream deep

UNTITLED-UNANSWERED

Alone
in an endless maze of millions
while God-given time passes
and some see
and some don't
and damned if you do and
damned if you don't so
damn if you give a damn
while one takes his life
and many ask "Why?" and
shake their heads
while all gave up
with hope still beating in
the hearts of men
and the question still
unanswered.

A TRAGEDY

As if alone, but followed
he marched (grey)
through the village (grey)
toward the sun — grey

Quickening her short steps
bright Christmas eyes
Stayed beside him.
Crossing his soul
he marched.

Chorous.

Cancerous black of night
slowly spreads its infection —
eating away the green
the yellow
the blue
eating away
the red of the day.

running free,
letting go
for the sun shines yellow
and hits me good
with warmth
and explosions within explosions
(love within love).

little girl,
why do you cry?
are you so afraid of believing
that the sun shines
just for you?

run free little girl
sail your dreams to heaven
and give the sun your love,
he never stops shining.

radiate little girl
fly high
Kiss the sun
be close.
rip open your heart
and melt the emptiness inside

and believe little girl
that I love you.

and it makes me wonder

words and letters
dead leafs of autumn
shades of pink spotted inkly blue

and it's there
the colors of fall - ing hope.

but stand spring
tall and proud
a whitegraygreen patched maple
as the little child
reaches only for the pining index finger
that guides the gentle toddler
on grocery shopping mama's day.
simple showers, new greens
one long removed from summery shadows
of laughs and orgasmic joys of spirit

and it's there

words and letters
dead leafs of autumn
shades of pink spotted inkly blue.

ULTIMARATIO

In the years to come
Remember the good times we had,
The lasting love we shared,
And not me.

In the years to come,
Anticipate the future in lieu
of the dreams we hoped for,
And not the realities we faced.

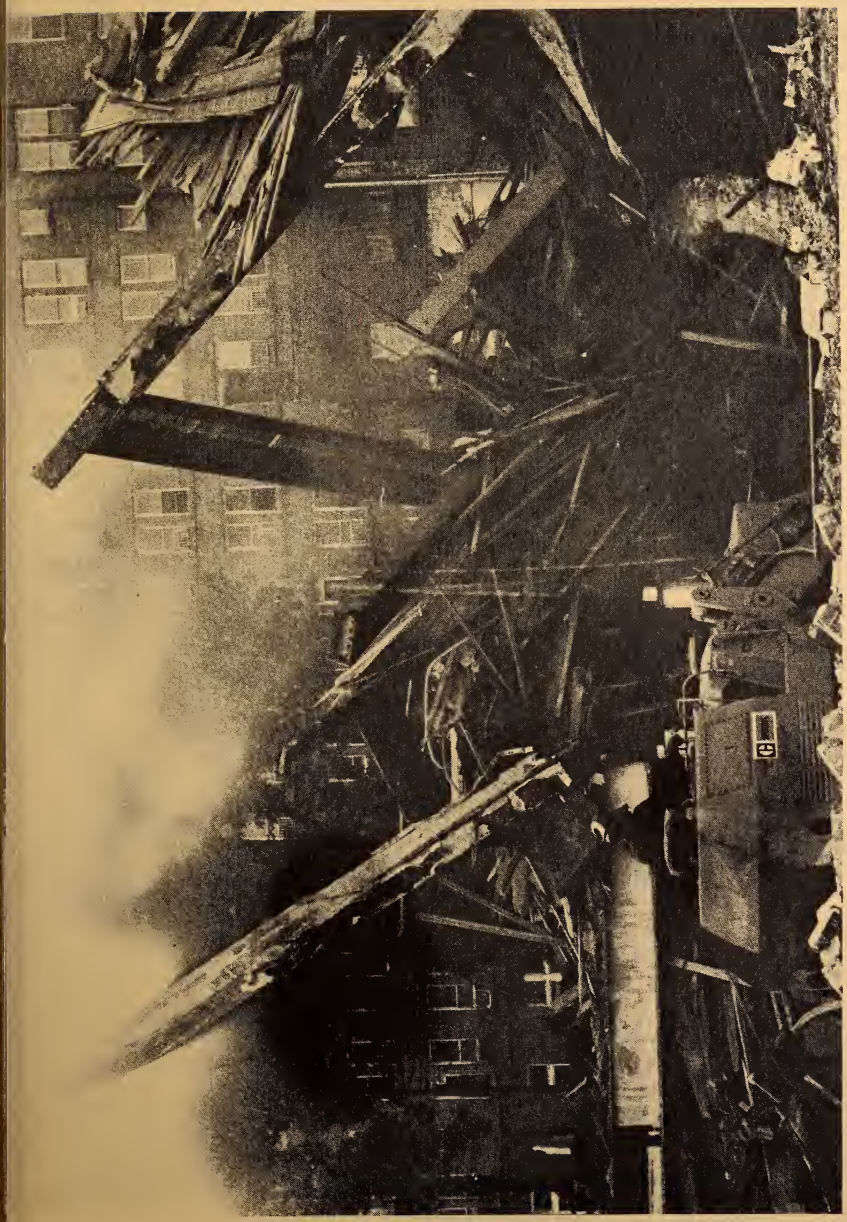
In the years to come,
Let the understanding we had —
that we loved each other — embrace your heart,
And not the moments of despair.

In the years to come,
Push all your heartaches aside.
Let the pleasantries soften your heart,
And not the cries of anguish.

In the years to come,
Honestly follow your heart.
Be guided by your convictions,
And not by those of others like you.

In the years to come,
Let us grow old together.
Let us love each other as things were,
And not so much as how they may be then.

In the years to come,
Follow the wisdom of the old man of Camelot.
Take heed to his logic.
Cautiously council his advice.
And then, we can guarantee to love each other,
With the promise of the years to come.



ON LEAVING
(OR: A TWO CABOOSE TRAINRIDE)

Stained glass windowed coach
and me
listening to the rainbow reflected
countryside
I see them there – a moment gone

We fought like feuding toads
before the whistle blew,
You're wrong they said
You have no chance
You'r only courting circumstance
Here's
the only place for you

A silent tear was my farewell.

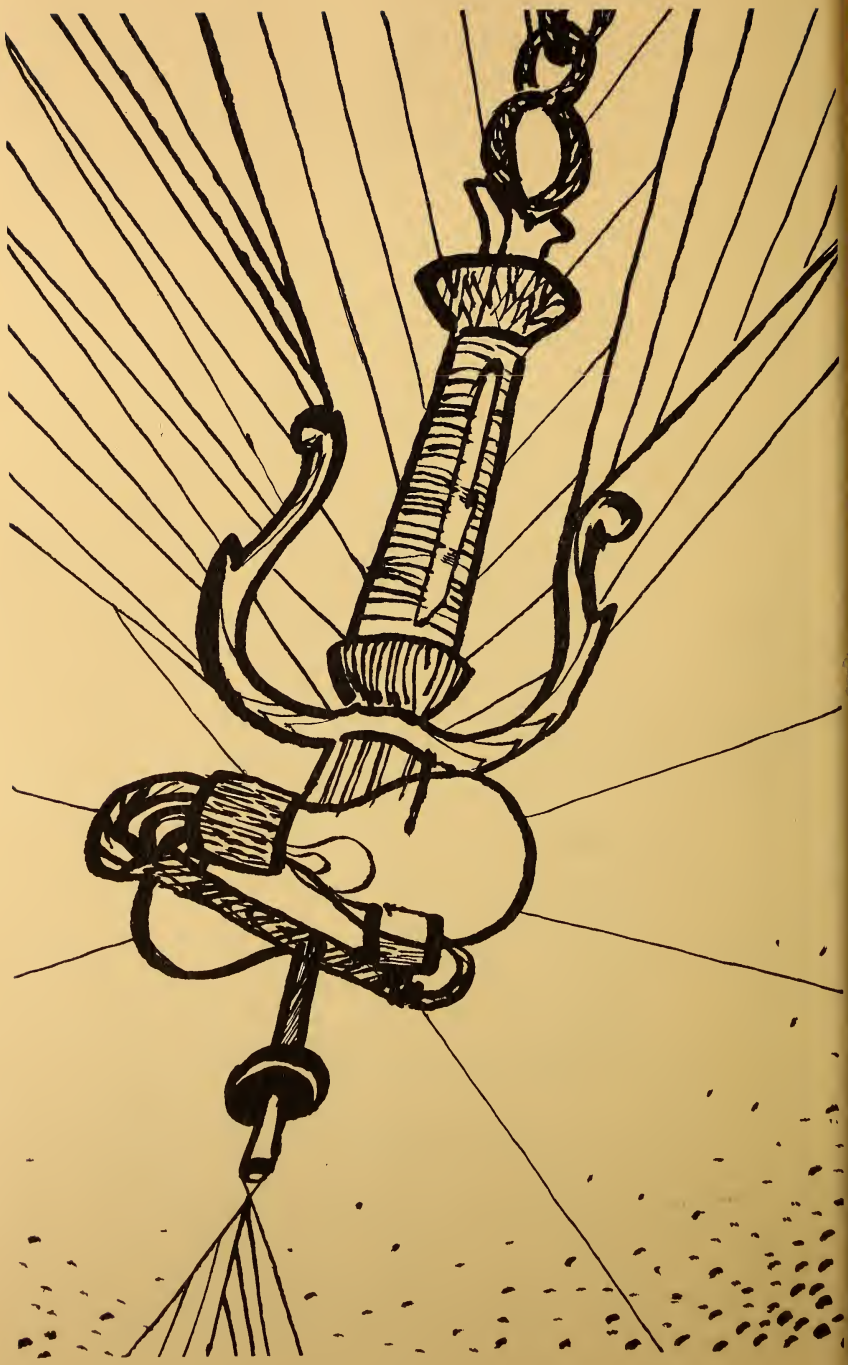
2072

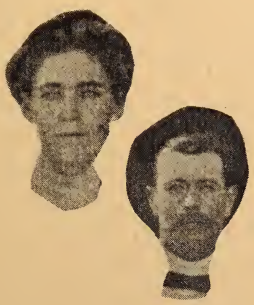
I wonder how things will be in 2072.
Will things 'be' at all?
At the rate we're going now,
Man seems certain to end it all.
Will there still be birds to sing?
Or air to breathe;
Or even clean water to drink?
After all is said and done,
Will man still have the ability to think?
Or will he be an android?
Conquered—
And held captive by his insatiable desire
To understand that which
He can never hope to comprehend.
Will hate and avarice have completed
Their task of internal corruption?

I wonder how things will be in 2072?

Will things 'be' at all?
At the rate we're going now,
Man seems certain to end it all.
Will the 'Messiah' have come,
Again?
Will the thousand year reign of the
UnGodly have gotten under way?

Funny, but 2072 seems so far away!





FINANCIAL REPORT

To: The Publications Board
From: The Editor of *The Journal*

The following is a statement concerning the financial status of *The Journal* for the academic year 1971-1972:

Total expenditures for the first semester	$ 856.25
second semester	2062.13
Total expenditures for the entire year	2918.38
Total income for the year 1971-1972	2820.00
Total expenditures	2918.00
Amount of deficit	98.38

Respectfully submitted,
A. Delaplaine
Editor, *The Journal*, 1971-1972

CREDITS

Page	Title	Author, Artist
1	FRIDAY	Philip Covington
2	DAMN TOILET	Charles Brookshire
5	FALL	anon
	BLUE STEEL	Lee Cunningham
6	photograph	Jim Moody
7	photograph	Gary Rhoden
8	THE SLEEPING NUDE	Ed Minus
9	FROM THE CEREAL BOWL	Lee Cunningham
	TO THE TREE	Bill Brown
10	JEWESS	Alan Johns
	A PROMISE	Alan Johns
11	poem	Clint Sherrill
	A GIMMY	David Cress
12	INHIBITIONS LOSE THEIR TEETH	Alan Johns
	PROVIDENCE	R. Warren Johnson
13	OVERWHELMED BY CREATION	anon
14	ink drawing	Tommy Carlisle
15	JUS CUNRY'S CAN BE	Lee Cunningham
16	ONCE UPON A DREAM	David Whitmire
17	6 O'CLOCK	John Hooe
	SHOTGUN	Ed Minus
18	ink drawing	Kathy Langdon
19	AFTERNOON	John Hooe
	THE BLIND JOURNEYMAN	Vernon Chandler
20	AMERICA: IN 4 MOVEMENTS	Lance Leonhirth
22	ODE ON JEAN	Dennis Shedd
23	BIRDBLESSIN	Lee Cunningham
24	photograph	Tommy Carlisle
25	UNTITLED - UNANSWERED	Robert Winburn
	A TRAGEDY	John Hooe
26	ink drawing	Kathy Langdon
27	poem	Susan Seegars
28	and it makes me wonder	Rusty Howie
29	ULTIMARATIO	David Whitmire
30	photograph	Gary Rhoden
31	ON LEAVING	Peter Page
32	2072	Bob Reeder
33	ink drawing	Tommy Carlisle

The Sleeping Nude and *Shotgun* were carried in the *New York Quarterly* and appear here by permission of the *NYQ*.

JOURNAL

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Since 1972 Wofford's Finest Publication

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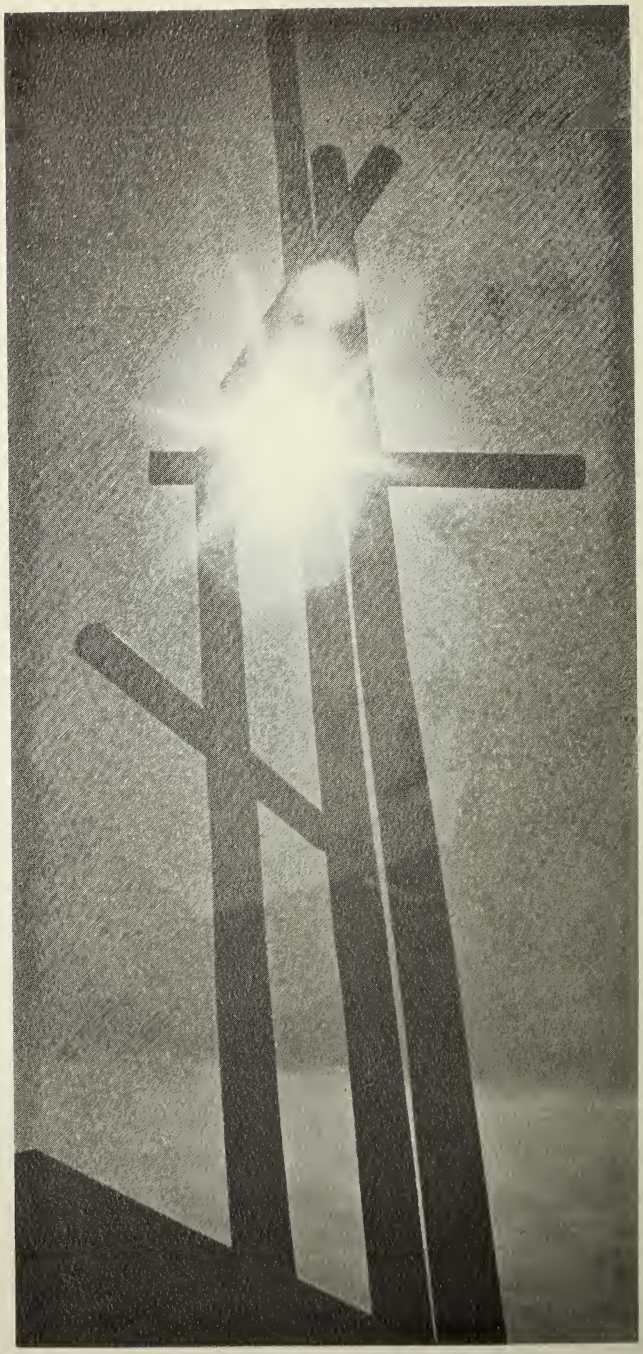
THE JOURNAL *is published four times during the academic year—in October December, March and May—by the students of Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina. Subscription rate is $2.50 per year. The magazine is supervised financially by the Wofford College Publications Board. Mr. Frank Anderson is advisor.*

on our way to the winter carnival



MARY

We see you Mary, not in a stable,
Nor by a manger
Looking down at a new-born child
Wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Nor do we see you in a crowd of shepherds
Filled with adoration for your son.

We see, instead, a barren hill
And on this hill, a cross --
Three crosses silhouetted dimly
Against an ever darkening sky.

And you, Mary, stand, a lonely woman,
A mother who has watched her first-born son
Ascend this hill and die.

For he is dead, this Jesus,
And some few who stand there with you,
Weep openly in their sorrow.
But no tears come to you,
So accustomed to the sadness
Of his life through all these years.

You, his mother, knew him
As no other one could know
And yet you did not recognize
The hidden drive, the powerful claim
Upon his life that pulled him far away
From you, his mother, from the moment of
his birth.

You stand here in this darkest hour
For any mother,
And you look up toward his broken frame,
And you do not see him on this cross.
You see, instead, beyond this hill --
Beyond this cross --
Beyond this city,
Cursed with hatred
And fanatics who would see
In every man an element
Of subversion and betrayal.

You look out toward the North --
Toward your home in Galilee
And you remember him, your son,
Not as one dead upon a tree
But as one who lived and moved
And spoke and loved;

And yet as one
Who walked among you --
You, his mother and his brothers,
Not as one whom you could know
But as a stranger.
"Who was this Jesus?"
Is it strange for you,
The one who bore him in your womb,
To ask this question --
"Who was he?"

You knew then that he never was your child
Even though he broke your womb.
You had pondered in your heart
A scene of dirty shepherds
Coming to the barn that night,
Saying something of an angel
Telling them about the birth
Of your own son.

You did not understand it then,
And they soon left,
Perhaps they had had too much to drink
And this was just a lark
To make long winter nights
Pass swiftly.

And now before the cross,
You long to find some comfort.
But the shepherds do not come today,
And you a widow and a mother
See your son, twisted and dead,
Before your eyes.

You wonder now on this day of his death
If it would not have been better for him
To have died by Herod's sword
Than for him to come to this sad hour
Misunderstood and dead
Upon a criminal's cross.

You would have mourned his death
If Herod had succeeded years before;
But you would have weeped for him then
As a mother weeps;
But now you cannot see him only
As your son;
And you do not understand his death;
Neither did you understand his life.
This Jesus - your flesh - your son
And yet a stranger both to you and to the world.

And so, in the moment of his death,
You now begin to understand his birth.
For in these last hours of life,
He is as helpless as he was
Within your arms in Bethlehem.

"Woman, behold your son!", he says.
In those final moments before his death.
And you behold and see,
For just a moment,
That he is your son
And you, his mother.

And then you see the other women at the cross
Look up to him at this same moment
And then you know why he cannot be your son -
He is the son of every woman.
For he is life, itself.

And then he says, "Behold your mother",
And each of us looks out toward you.
For you, the mother of our Lord,
Became our mother, too.

But soon we must rise from our knees,
And flee the Herods of our day.
But we will meet you, Mary,
At the cross,
And then with you, look back
Upon this moment
As the time it all began.

'HAZY FACES, SOMETIMES'

BUT YOUR PROFESSORS OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Standing in a large mountain meadow at night
I let the stars enter my thoughts
for illumination
if nothing else

In their form world
they streak silently into the infinite
and for one brief second
their infinity becomes a flaming thought
not of my consciousness,
but greater, trillion-fold, in dynamic awareness
such that my Self, high energy space,
expands to unfathomable proportions

I realize now
that I am
not a poet of words:
indeed, not a poet of thought--
a musical note of light from a celestial symphony, perhaps?

CLOCKWORK

the clock.

I wander among sleeping books
and shadows of books
covers dead green dead brown dead
pages live to yellow

closing time was twelve
'we must lock up thieves you know'
they blink the lights again
they go around like SS men
I've read her diary

So here am I
to wander
sleeping among books
shadows

the clock.

SILENCE UPON THE SHORE

The sea rises and falls.
Crests and shallows, lifting, sinking
Come to hush in sheets of swirling silence upon the shore.

A sweet sad song of memories;
A summer sky so steeped in pleasant whisps of wonder . . .
And the tiny feathered lives
Spend their day playing, running with the wave.

Let me weep with this melody;
The flowing tears of the balladeer,
Remembering the breeze scented with the sea
Touching tenderly;
So placid in its fury,
Cooling, soothing, moistened cheeks.

And if you see such tears
And smile with eyes as soft and pure
Then I shall dream of you.

And they come so clearly real.
We would have turned homeward soon enough.
I hear a shutter aloose in the wind.
Our wings would have crumbled, in time:

For the warmth is not a dweller here
But a whispered breath
So faint and shying.

Lonely, wanting of the warmth
I stand weakly before the storm
Awaiting the tender songs of weeping glow and stillness,

A sea in silent strength,
And the sounds dissolve beneath its whisper.

SONNET TO COAL

That I am black and ugly say you all;
A pile of coal - - black smoke and dust to make,
Invader of each crypt or building tall,
Or highest mountaintop or lucid lake.

I foul the air, surround the drops of dew;
Or, restless, into every crack I go
To turn to drab the spotless and the new,
To smudge, to smut, wherever winds may blow.

Yet every atom of me does contain
A spark of fire from heaven sent to warm
That very soul that I am known to pain - -
Blest heat I give also to those I harm.

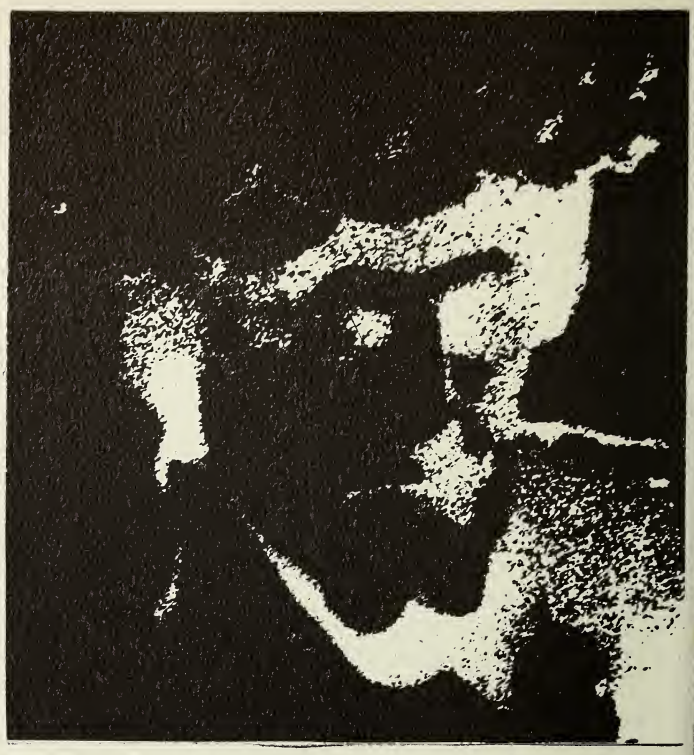
For nothing is forever good nor bad;
Today's sad heart tomorrow will be glad.

ELEGY: THE DEATH OF A BEE WHO DIED BEFORE HAVING LIVED

Ah, woebegone little bee, frozen
on the window screen
Brought forth to life ahead of time
by quirk of fate -
misplaced summer warmth.

Now, death's clutch secures your eternal perch.
Alas, to be frozen in hope for life's meaning.

Friends, loved ones, we are gathered here . . .



BLACK PEARL, PLACE

thick black, seeping through
the crack in my windowpain.
the trees are whispering to each other
secrets they dare not betray.
that sullen orb . . . hidden, hiding, waiting.
night-bird, screaching like some ancient sibyl.

kind darkness, smother me with your
blissful nebulosity,
play your nocturn tune,
dance the adagio, quickly—
morning draws near,
and with it: lights' definity.

TREMBLE WOOD

Just about everyone at Llanwick Castle tried to avoid the Tremble Wood. Around the hearths at night, they told fearful stories about the Tremble Wood. Only the most puissant knights dared venture within its groves, and none returned without an adventure to report. Six Huw had fought with a golden boar, and, though he wounded it and it bled crystal clear blood (so it did not show on his shield) it escaped. The pages heard this tale, among them Gwen, and boasted to each other of their willingness to fare into the storied place. Other knights, flagons in hand, and swords rusty at their sides, agreed with Sir Huw about the peculiarity of the Tremble Wood. Sir Dafydd, his great red beard wagging, said that, although he did have the good fortune of meeting Sir Hud's golden boar, he had done battle with a little green gnome. Well, not a gnome, but more of a hunchback. A sturdy hunchback who wielded a four foot broadsword. He, too, had drawn blood, but, as it was white, the same color as his shield, he bore no trophies. Again, the pages nudged each other. As the talk progressed, and the knights called for more drink or for a foot-stool or for a leg of venison, the pages busied themselves. The pages of Sir Huw and Sir Dafydd answered their masters' calls with an eagerness that showed their pride. Not stinting in their duties, however, the other pages sometimes looked with longing at the favored fellows. When the knights ceased summoning their pages, they gathered in a corner of the dining hall.

The boasts flew. Gwen, the pages of Sir Thomas, burned with shame. His master had sat silent. Weary of the unworthy behaviour of his master and the taunting of his friends, he burst out, "Say what you will. I shall go into the Tremble Wood." They laughed. "I will. By St. Merlin, I will." Gasps followed that statement. If anyone swore by St. Merlin, and did not fulfill their vow, it was said that the venerated magician would turn him into a yew tree. Frightened by his own boldness, Gwen tried to cover up his nervousness. "Not only will I go, but I will go alone." Gareth, one of the larger boys, silenced the others with "I do not believe him. You all know how he likes to raise himself above us. Remember when his hawk did better than any of ours? Didn't he walk around looking proud! He almost would not lower himself to speak with us. I say that you are only boasting, Gwen. And since you have sworn by St. Merlin, you know what will happen." "Tomorrow! When dawn comes tomorrow, I will go into that place." Gwen blinked, but did not cry. "So," said Gareth, "if you say so. But I shall make sure that you do. The others will help me. Witnessess. I make another condition. You must not take your dirk!" Gwen gingered his dirk. It was his favorite possession, besides his hawk, Swift-talon. Before he had left his home for Llanwick Castle, his father had given him the dirk. It was made of the highest tempered metal, and the handle was gold with an emerald tip. "Agreed," he whispered. Not yet satisfied, Gareth snatched the dirk from its scabbard. "I will hold your precious dirk until you return. But I am chivalrous. If you do as you say, you shall have any of my goods that you ask for." The group of pages, weary of their duties and anxious for the promising dawn, climbed the stairs to their pallets. These conditions were meant to improve their characters.

His blanket pulled up around his chin, Gwen lay and thought of tomorrow. He could not regret his vow, but he could not forget the tales of the knights. Would he be gored by Sir Huw's golden boar? Without his dirk, how could he defend himself? And the green hunchback with the four-foot broadsword. A sword almost as tall as himself and with an edge, he felt certain, that could cut him in two. What else lay in there? With Brother Ambrose, learning his Latin, he had read stories of the queer beasts which roamed in forgotten corners of the world. There was the griffin. He had seen many griffins depicted on shields, their scaly wings out-spread and their lion mouths open in rage. Bears. Would he see one licking its cub into bear-shape, as a potter formed his wares? And the most fearsome of all, because it would not fit into one form – The cameleopard. Drifting into a fevered slumber, Gwen dreamed of all these beasts, arrayed in a fearful concert against him. Yet he could not flee, even in his dreams. He awoke. Dawn was just beginning. None of the other had risen yet. An idea springing to his brain, he quickly put on his clothes and scampered down the stairs.

The chapel was in a corner, at the junction of the west and north walls. Scurrying inside, Gwen saw that Brother Ambrose was preparing for matins. Dressed in his surplice, and wearing a heavy gold crucifex around his neck, he looked entirely different from the Brother Ambrose who genially oversaw the boys education. A certain majesty, which, Gwen guessed, had something to do with his vestments, shined from him. "You are about very early, today Gwen," Brother Ambrose said. He wheezed when he spoke, reminding Gwen of the huge bellows that Cuthbert the blacksmith pumped with such ease. "I want you to give me a special blessing," Gwen stammered. "What?" A special blessing? Do you expect your soul to fall into immediate peril?" Gwen looked at the floor and repeated his request. "Very well, Can you tell me what saint you especially want to preserve you?" "St. Merlin." The priest chuckled. "You know that St. Merlin, as you call him, is not officially canonized. It would be almost blasphemy if I gave you a blessing in his name." "Please, Brother Ambrose. You could say some Ave Marias for penance." If you must be blessed by St. Merlin, I can do it." He then retired behind a screen. Reappearing some moments later, he wore his customary brown robe. The surplice and the crucifex were absent, kneeling with bowed head, Gwen listened to him pronounce the blessing. He did not see the little grin at the corners of Brother Ambrose's mouth. Gwen leaped up and dashed from the chapel. His nose told him that the mews, stables and kennels were near. Old Evan, the keeper of the mews, lay curled asleep by his post. Shaking him gently, Gwen watched him as he stupidly rubbed the sleep from his rheumy eyes. After years of tending to the court birds, Evan had taken on some of the characteristics of his charges. He had the eyes of an owl, the nose of a raven, and his hair stood sparsely and wildly on his skull like the crest of a kingfisher. Wearing a mottled old cloak, he spread it out like a pair of wings and gestered with withered hands which looked like talons. "What do you want with me so early, master Gwen?" he asked in a high voice. "An old man needs his sleep. Perhaps I should wear a hood like the birds, eh? Then I could sleep without the world getting in." "Please, Evan, can I have Swift-talon?" "What is this, master Gwen? What is this? You know that Swift-talon is ill-tempered early in the morning. You know that he hunts best in the heat of the day. I did not know that a party was setting out today. Why did nobody tell me? The earl

knows that I must have advance notice." "There is no hunt, Evan. I want Swift-talon this morning. We're going off alone. You know how jealous the others get when he makes more strikes than their hawks." "But master Gwen, can you handle him by yourself? You know that I always go along to handle any excited birds." "I need him, Evan. If you don't let me have him, I'll, I'll . . ." He trailed off, almost in tears. Softened by the boy's pleadings, Evan gave in. "Very well, master Gwen, you may have him. I cannot approve, and if he accidently claws you, the Earl will blame me." Grousing, Evan stumbled into the mews and returned with Swift-talon. Gwen thought, as he always did when he saw his hawk, that with his hood he looked like a monk or a knight with a closed visor. Swift-talon was of even grey color, and, upon Gwen's fist, his heart beat vibrated through the boy's frame.

Gwen remembered food. His last visit took him to the kitchen. Gwen urged Bronwyn the cook to gather some food quickly. He had important duties to carry out, tasks which would take the whole day. Anxious to ply people with her cooking, Bronwyn did not ask more questions. She cheerfully tossed victuals in a sack. "Remember about Sir Perwin, my pretty Gwen. You have a fine figure, so don't let it creep out of bounds." He slung the sack over his back and marched to the castle gates. Gareth and some of the other pages awaited him. "Here he is, after all," Gareth crowed. "And just look at him! Provisioned like an army. But what's that? His hawk? You are not allowed any weapons, Gwen." "Swift-talon's not a weapon. What if I want to do some hunting in the Tremble Wood?" "What could you get in there? Could your hawk bring down a griffin?" Perhaps". "Now he claims that his hawk can kill a griffin!" He laughed. "Perhaps not anything you see in books," Gwen said, "but he can blood anything you have ever seen on wings." "I don't think we should call his hawk a weapon," one of the pages said timidly. Swift-talon squawked beneath his hood and moulted some tail feathers. Gwen calmed him. "Very well," said Gareth, "we admit that your hawk is no weapon. You may take him. But I just thought of something. What if you go out the castle portals and hide in some bushes? How will we really know that you have gone into the Tremble Wood?" "You can escort me to the edge," Gwen said. Everybody saw Gareth's face blanch. "No, Gwen. You must do it by yourself. What we need is proof, a token. Something like Sir Huw's and Sir Dafydd's." "But . . . but . . ." Gwen quailed, "I have no shield or lance to be stained with unseen blood." "We all know of the jewelled peacocks that are said to strut in those groves," Gareth said. "So you can return with one of their tail feathers. It may be adorned with rubies or emeralds or amethysts, no matter. Just one. Bring that back and no wight can doubt the truth of your adventure." One added condition to his already fantastic pledge did not bother Gwen. If he were able to travel in the forbidden region at all, certainly he could discover the fabled peacocks. "I will abide by your conditions," Gwen sighed. "Godspeed," the pages chorused.

Gwen walked through the portals. The village lay a few rods from the castle. Gwen had seldom paid much attention to the village or the villagers. He had passed through on horseback, among hunting parties, but never on foot or alone. He felt his own lack of protection, even with Swift-talon on his fist. Before, he had been able to look down on the flimsy mud and straw huts, but now he passed by their very door-jambs. Laborers were careful to pull their forelocks to Gwen

as he went by, and the children, after gaping at his silk and velvet clothes, scampered into the dark door-ways. Even the dogs would not bark at him. Just outside the village there lay a weir in the stream that supplied the people with washing and drinking water. Gwen lingered before the weir, gazing at some village boys capering naked in the water. Upon seeing him, their revelry suddenly stopped. A boy boldly called out, "What do you require of us, my lord?" Confused, Gwen lowered his head and shuffled his feet. Encouraged by his silence, one of them walked slowly over to him. He had pulled on a patched linen shirt, which reached to his knees and was his only garment. "May I help you in your hunting, my lord?" he asked, eying the hawk. "I know several good places where the grouse flock." "I am not on a hunt," Gwen said. "It's a quest." "A quest? Have they not already found the holy grail?" "Yes. But I travel toward the Tremble Wood." The boy was agog. Like every child in the village, he had been instructed by his parents of the terrors that lay in that forbidden place.Gwen returned to the road. He did not know how far it was to his quest.

Swift-talon was getting restless. To give him some exercise, Gwen peered into the sky for likely game. He was just entering the Tremble Wood and had not yet noticed the silence. No frogs croaked. No small beasts rustled in the underbrush. The birds did not twitter. Yet there were birds. He saw a sparrow perched on an oak. Anxious to give his bird some flight, he took off the hood and thrust his arm at the branches. Swift-talon sped to the target. Feathers burst into the air. When he looked at what should have been a cavant branch, Gwen saw a little headless sparrow skelton. The skelton still gripped the perch.

He whistled for his falcon. As he scanned the sky, he could see no trace of her. Then he looked at the base of the oak. There lay his bird with a broken neck. Gwen picked up the corpse, still warm. He laid it back down, and began to tremble. And to flee. But not away from Tremble Wood. Blindly, he ran deeper into the shadows. Dropping his sack of food.

When he stopped running, he did so because he was tired. He had almost forgotten what he was running from. Looking at the hood he gripped in his palm, he remembered. A pair of hares caught his attention. They didn't move as he approached them. Timidly, he touched one. The head crumbled. It must have been dead for years. Wherever he looked, Gwen saw beasts frozen in natural attitudes.

Suddenly, he heard a rustling behind him. Turning on his heel, he saw a face framed in a strategic spider-web. It was an old man dressed in a patched cloak and carrying a staff. "Who are you?" Gwen asked tremulously. "I had a name once," the old man replied in a sepulcheral tone. "But I have forgotten it." "Where do you come from?" "Not from here." "But what are you doing here?" "It is my penance." "Are you a spirit?" "Touch me and see." Gathering his courage, Gwen touched the hem of his garment. It was real. Before he could frame another question, the old man cried, beating his staff on the ground, "Let me in, mother, let me in. Must I wander forever?" He was down on his knees, pounding the earth with his mottled fists. "I am alone" said Gwen. "Will you stay with me?" "I cannot," the old man replied. "May I travel with you?" "I cannot prevent you" was all that he answered.

Then, oblivious to Gwen's presence, he began to tetter along a path, which Gwen saw for the first time. But they did not make much progress. The old man

periodically kneed and beat the earth, demanding to be swallowed up. Although he was the only living being besides himself in the Tremble Wood, Gwen grew weary of his conduct. The path widened and a fork appeared. Studying, it intently, Gwen noticed hoof-prints. Horses. Intrigued, Gwen stole away from the old man along the fork bearing the hoof-prints. They were deep, apparently those of a war-horse.

He walked along the path tracing the hoof-prints until twilight. Although tired, he was afraid to stop and sleep. For a moment, he wished that he had continued following the wandering old fool. Maybe he had been a monk and was journeying to a monastery where wine, butter bread and meat lay. He was hungry. Gwen awakened from his reverie with a start. For to his left in a little grove of beeches was an emerald pavilion. And beside the pavilion a hugh black horse was cropping. Surprised at his own temerity, Gwen dasked up to the pavilion. He looked inside. It was empty.

To his relief, however, a meal was laid out. A fat pair of capon, steaming from the fire, lay nestled in a mushroom gravy. A jeweled goblet brimmed with clear wine. Without hesitation, Gwen grabbed a capon and already was munching a breast when a voice boomed, "Get thee behind me, satan!" Gwen choked on his capon. "What infernal language is this?" asked the voice. "Speak in Welsh, thou denizen of the nether regions."

Gwen wheeled about and confronted his benefactor. The knight was naked. He did, however, have his broadsword gripped in his delicate hands. In fact, upon closer inspection, Gwen took him to be a clerk. His mouth still full, Gwen could not reply as the clerkly knight continued his imprecations. "What manner of being are you? You resemble a boy, but satan, is known in many guises, yea he can even take the form of swine as we read in the scriptures and Jesus at Gadarene. Are you some gnome, some dwarf, some changeling who was sent by dark forces to tempt me, even to do mortal combat with me and me without my loins girded but clothed nevertheless in righteousness?" "My name is Gwen of Llewellyn." The clerkly knight hesitated. "What? Are you indeed mortal and in fact Welsh?" "Yes," said Gwen. "But what are you about, wandering alone except for God's presence (which I have, may I be forgiven) begun to wander about in this dismal copse which contains nothing but corpses?" "I lost my falcon," said Gwen. "Indeed? Did she fly in here and you came to trace her but lost your way like a sinner and like us all, but you stumbled upon my encampment and chanced to smell my provender and ventured inside to replenish your frail frame and then I walked in naked with my sword to scare you and make you choke which I mistook for an infernal tongue?" "Yes," said Gwen. "De Gratias," murmured the clerkly knight, "for I was sore afraid and did not wish to impugn my honor without being dressed in mail as well as in righteousness." "What is your name?" asked Gwen. "Sir Ieuen, formerly brother Ieuen of the St. Dafydd monastery." "That explains your hands, then," Gwen observed. "My hands?" "Yes. They look more able to hold a pen than a sword."

Forgetting his nakedness, Sir Ieuen launched into his personal history. Between mouthfuls, Gwen listened. "Yes, it is true," said the clerkly knight. "I was indeed the inmate of a cloister. The brothers raised me from birth and taught me my letters. As it turned out, I was endowed from Above with a fine hand. Thus the abbot assigned me the task of copying the ancient texts. It was in copying the texts that I first became imbued with the spirit of the church militant. From the holy scriptures and our own Mabinegian, I learned that a holy zeal should be put to good use on this earth. Naturally, my zeal was a matter of

conversation among the gentle brothers. The stories I could relate of slothfulness which take place within the very walls of our holiest institution! Why brother Gawain, he didn't even know to, or care for that matter, cross himself! But I digress. Impelled by the holy fire of a good cause, I determined to go into the world as a knight and personally combat, with God's succor, the forces of evil so manifest and among which we now even abide! I am ashamed to tell of what happened next. Under cover of darkness, I slunk from the monastery and ventured into the village. As it happened, a party of knights were sojourning there. By some ingenious stratagem, I managed to acquire the horse and armor of a certain knight who had indulged too much in the vine. Caparisoned in these habiliments, I trotted away. Since I was not familiar with the surrounding terra, I became lost. Through some celestial design, I found myself in this place, unlike anything on middle-earth. Although I have seen such places described in certain texts, But enough of me, lad. What design has led you here?"

Gwen described his predicament as the clerkly knight dressed himself in his purloined armor. But he soon discovered that he could not speak at any length without some naive queries from his companion. As soon as Sir Ieuen learned of his status as a page, he bombarded Gwen with demands about the minutest details of knightly behavior as practiced at Llanwick castle. "Well, Sir Ieuen," mused Gwen, "what I think you should do to behave like a knight is this: gather about you some fellow knights and some comely wenches. Then hold garrulous feats and do nothing but eat and drink, especially drink! Make the wenches squeal, although I don't quite know how it's done. When everybody's happy and the dogs are licking the wine from the faces of the knights on the floor, you've acted like a knight. That is all to knight manner. Except you dress in your armor about once a year, usually on St. David's day and hunt wild bear. But brave deeds should never be forgotten, and a true knight will always blush before he tells of his exploits." "Blush?" said a surprised Sir Ieuen. "Why, of course! It is so in all the chronicles. And be chaste. I shall have no occasion to forget that. Perhaps my monkly upbringing aided me more than I thought." "At least," said Gwen, "you have a means of getting away from her. I don't have anything but my feet. Would it please you if I accompanied you as your squire?" If you leave me the other capon and a drop or two of wine, yes."

With that, the two exchanged further pleasantries and before long decided to retire. Sir Ieuen made certain that his horse was secure and thence went to sleep. Gwen, after pondering his adventures, did likewise. Both awoke surprised that the dawn actually came. "I'm hungry," said Gwen. "And I too," said the knight. "Let's have some more capons," suggested Gwen. "They're all gone. I only brought one day's worth of food from the monastery." "Did you notice any fish in the stream where you bathed last night?" asked Gwen. "No. Well, a man with a good cause can ignore the mundane," blithely said Sir Ieuen. "Maybe." "At any rate, let us first try to find our way out of this labyritnh. If an adventure comes, I shall not shirk it. But there is often wisdom in prudence." Bellies empty, the pair packed the pavilion and Gwen jumped on the horse's rump. Sir Ieuen was not wise in the ways of horsemanship. The steed jumped nervously and did not obey his commands. Gwen persuaded him to hand over the reins. Their positions reversed, they trotted down the path.

Again, the sun shined through the silence. They could not detect even the slightest breeze. After an hour or so of leisurely riding, they came upon a pond. Thirsty, they dismounted. Kneeling to drink, Gwen suddenly stopped. Something shimmered just beneath the surface. "Sir Ieuen," he called, "what is that in the water?" The knight peered closer, his eyes weak from poring over texts. "I don't

know. But it's not a fish." At that moment a head burst above the surface and a scream rent the air.

A body followed the head and rose like Venus from the sea. It was a woman. Her bright golden hair, despite the wetness, gleamed in the sun. It feel to her thighs, for modesty's sake. The knight paled at the sight of a nude female. To their amazement, the lady spoke, although in an inhuman voice. "Revenge me, sir knight! I was murdered here a hundred years ago. The Tremble Wood will never come alive again so long as my ill use remains unredressed. Go to the caves near the split oak. There you will find my murderer. Avenge me and redeem the forest!" She sank into the waters without entertaining questions.

Gwen recognized some Latin phrases which Sir Ieuen was repeating fervidly. The paternoster. Gwen could not feel the obvious astonishment of his companion. Since his entry into the Tremble Wood, he had begun, like the adolescent he was, to accept odd events without question. Nurtured from birth on tales of miracle-working saints and wizards and a partaker of the eucharist, his credulity was virtually all encompassing. He found it hard to understand why Sir Ieuen had reacted so vehemently. "What will we do?" he asked of the knight. "My path is certain," he answered. "I must seek out the fiend that ravished and murdered this maiden." "I'm tired of the woods." Gwen said. "For coming with these groves, I've lost my most treasured possession. My falcon." "But not honor," the knight said quietly. Gwen resigned himself. He could not desert this strange pilgrim. "The caves, then," he said.

The huge split oak that the appartition had mentioned dominated the path just a few hundred yards from the pool. Apparently struck by lightning, the oak was dead on one side. The caves, for several honeycombed the hill, were not large. Gwen guessed that he could just squeeze into the entrance if necessary. He dismounted and relinquished the reins to the knight. To get a better view of whatever was to happen, he climed into the forks of a nearby tree.

"In the name of the father, the son and the holy spirit I call forth the murderer of the maid!" the knight boomed. No response. He repeated his challenge twice more. From the caves at last came multitudinous, reluctant groans. One by one, yellow skulls inched out like infants being born. As the rest of the skeletons appeared, Gwen saw that fragments of clothing and mail clung to them. Not only that, but each was laid out funerally and clutched a rusty sword and a rotting shield. Gwen felt like the Resurrection had suddenly occurred. Gravity took its course, however, and once outside the tombs, the skeletons disentegrated. A pile of bones accumulated. The earth had spewed up the dead knights. Gwen thought of the wandering old fool who had wishes for just such a fate. He looked intently at the knight. The spectacle had no obvious effect on him. "Rest in peace," he whispered.

A monkly figure appeared on the crest of the hill. "What do you seek?" he asked. "The murderer," came the answer. "What do you intend?" "I want to see that justice is done him." "His name is legion," said the figure. "You see his bones before you." "But," stammered Sir Ieuen, "how can it be so?" "All these were once men as yourself. They sought. And what they found was not what they desired." "What did they find?" "The spirit in the pond?"

"Did you kill her. And these?" "No. They committed the supreme affront to God. They killed themselves." "Why?" "Because they found the truth. Do you wish to hear the truth?" "I know it. I too am a monk." "No. You do not. It cannot be found in texts, nor in one of your quests." He pronounced the last word with contempt. "Will you tell me before I kill you?" asked the knight. "Are you a lesser man than these?" he pointed at the bones. "NO." "Then the

truth is this: death. If you remain true to your quest, you must face the truth as these others." Sir Ieuen dismounted. He removed his sword and bared his breast. He leapt from his perch and dashed up to the hooded figure. Spurred by a desperate boldness, he grabbed the cowl and pulled it back.

The man looked embarrassed. The sun shone on his bald pate and made his scraggly beard the yellower. Sir Ieuen stopped in the midst of his ultimate gesture. Suddenly the old man spoke and his voice lost its authority. They had to strain to hear him. "Sheathe your sword, sir knight. I would not have allowed you to kill yourself despite the boy's action. The others are dead because they recognized the truth but tried to avoid it. They sought dragons and gnomes and in truth they found them. And they were killed by them and did not kill themselves as you were about to. I have determined your meetle. You are not wanting. Put down your sword. Return to your monastery. The world will remember you for your immaculately copied texts and not for your venture into bombast. And you boy. What will you be? Think upon it. As you can see, the "curse" is now broken. I hope that my machinations did not cause any harm. For these men died not because of me but because of a desire to acquire trophies, an urge which they mistook for a quest of truth. Go. Remember death, for I shall not forget you." He vanished, as did the bones. They looked about them and things lived. Ieuen threw down the sword and kicked aside his armor. "Come, Gwen. Those reeds down by the pond are of fine quality. I shall cut some for my pens before I return to St. Dafydds."

Gwen did not get his peacock feather. And no page or knight believed his tale when he returned to Llanwick castle. He disavowed and turned away from a life of knighthood and his father disowned him. Nobody understood his explanations. Only monks listened. And women. He did not value chastity, so he spurned the cloister. He remembered what he had seen and decided to write it down. But it was not credible. So he became a bard and changed events to suit artistic purposes. He had forgotten about death.

A SAMPLE
OF THE
REDS
NSES
BLO
PROGR M

THE NECKLACE OF SWINE

Warm September rain
falling
wetting my body
the hair on my head
pressed into black ringlet mats
upon my cheeks
I never hid my head
for the water tells me
it was boiled from the river Ganges
and poured steaming
from grey cloud skys
far far from India
to baptize me in my every step
A few instants later
my eyes lit upon a long-haired bearded youth
(an earlier portriat of my self)
whose acid-induced halocinationations
cast patterns in the shadows
as he tripped over
cracks in the sidewalk
spiders on the lawn
diamonds in the trees
electric-wired thoughts with long arms
images of open doors
echoes in the Jungle of the Night Do-Da People
words that tasted like lemon heaven. . .
It was this way every time:
changes lacked abruptness and became l
i
q
u
id
He glanced up and smiled
said Hi
gh
I followed suit
glanced up and smiled
said. . . . and . . .
walked on by

Nothing more

Beads of rainwater were strung
across my vision
like mother-o-pearl swine. .
rainbow pork for a vegetarian

WHERE.

I could tell when we sat at the Cid
and had us a cold one or two
that you were where I wanted to be
'cause there's no place as lovely as you.

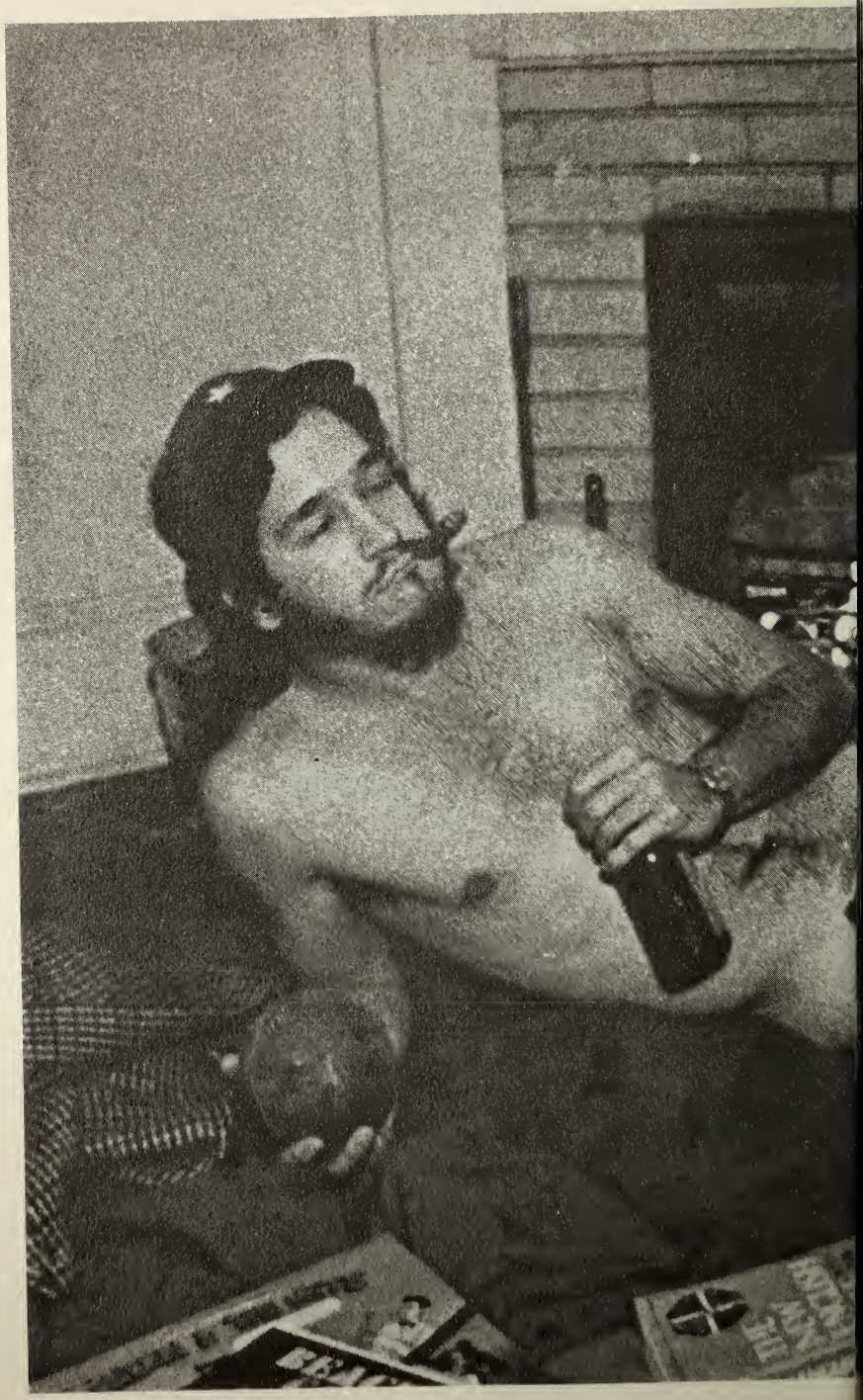
I could tell when we drove in the mountains
that your mind was as free as the air
and the currents of thought deep in your eyes
made me wish for my life I was there.

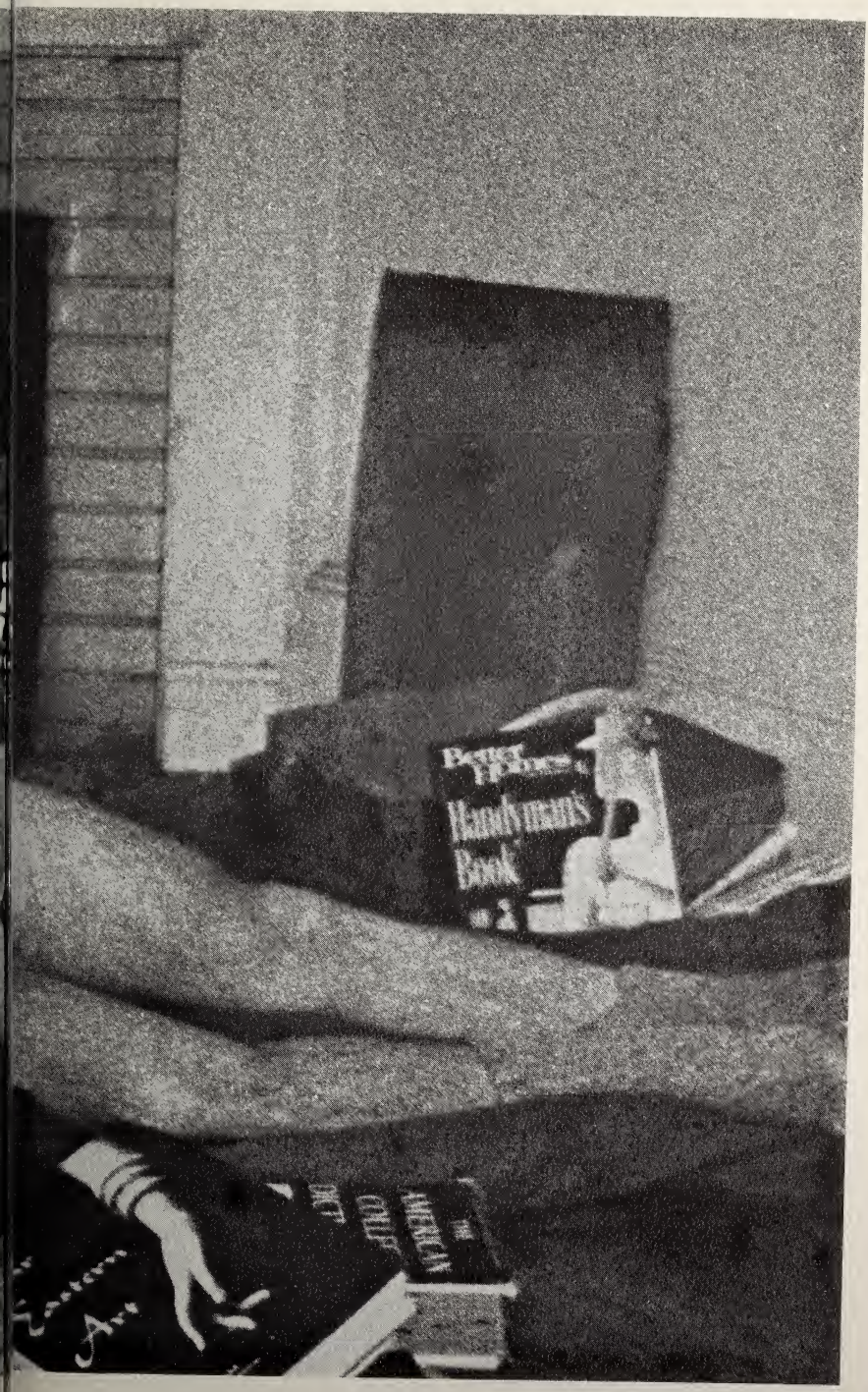
I could tell when you woke up that morning
and played all those new songs for me
that the rain didn't really quite matter
and you were where I wanted to be.

****

Sometimes
in Winter
I see
smiling faces
more and more
when God blesses
the child
at the spinning
wheel,

spinning.




Better Homes
Handyman's
Book
Eastern
Art
AMERICAN
CHILD

WATERMELON

Ned thumps it with his knuckle.
There's an echo in the barn.
The bees desert the hollyhocks.
The knife returns the sun.

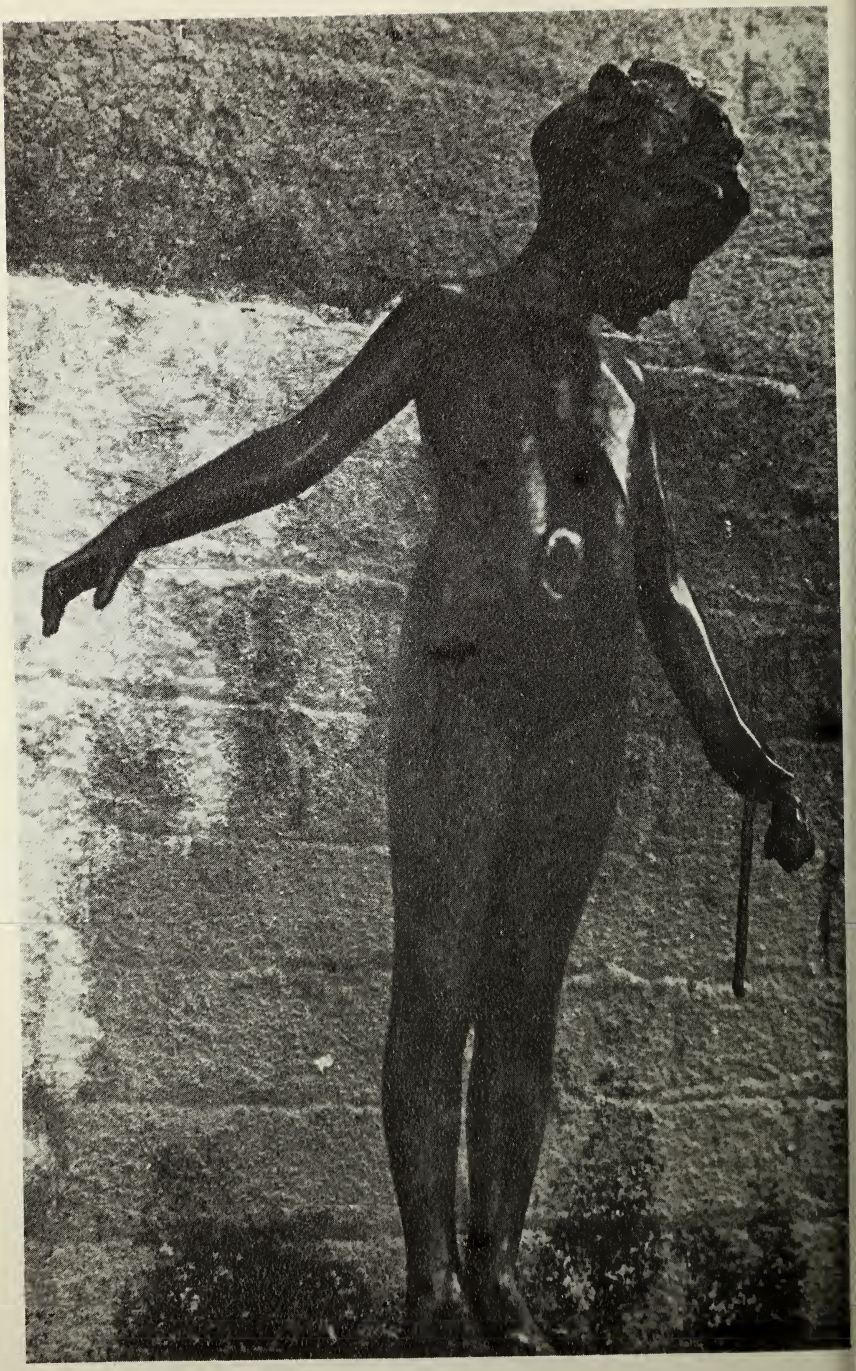
Then the melon lies wide open –
Like an August valentine;
Like summer's dictionary,
Thumb-indexed and sublime.

A LEGACY

I awoke to feel a blanket black
cold against my skin,
Retreating slowly down my legs
like some unloyal friend.

Like some sly fellow
or lady either
It teases past my toes,
It gathers Its things
(some books by Synge)
And through the window flows.

From where this intruder came
I'm lost,
And where it goes, I've been;
Though I've read my Robert Frost,
It's the road not taken again.



Why are you called retarded?

Is it because you love
everyone or anyone who will
smile or talk to you?

Is it because you give
all of yourself
when you give?

And all exist the same to you?

Is it because you are happy?

BUS

Vaporous flight spilling through
the desperate sieve of twilight
Cling to Earth edge!

Dark pitted mask laughs death --
Peering wounds
alive with primevial fire.

Self chill opiate numbs
Grasp of darkness.

The sky fell
in small gray pieces
onto the ground.
A little old man
picked them up
and took them home,

because he was lonely.

THE HUMAN IN MAN

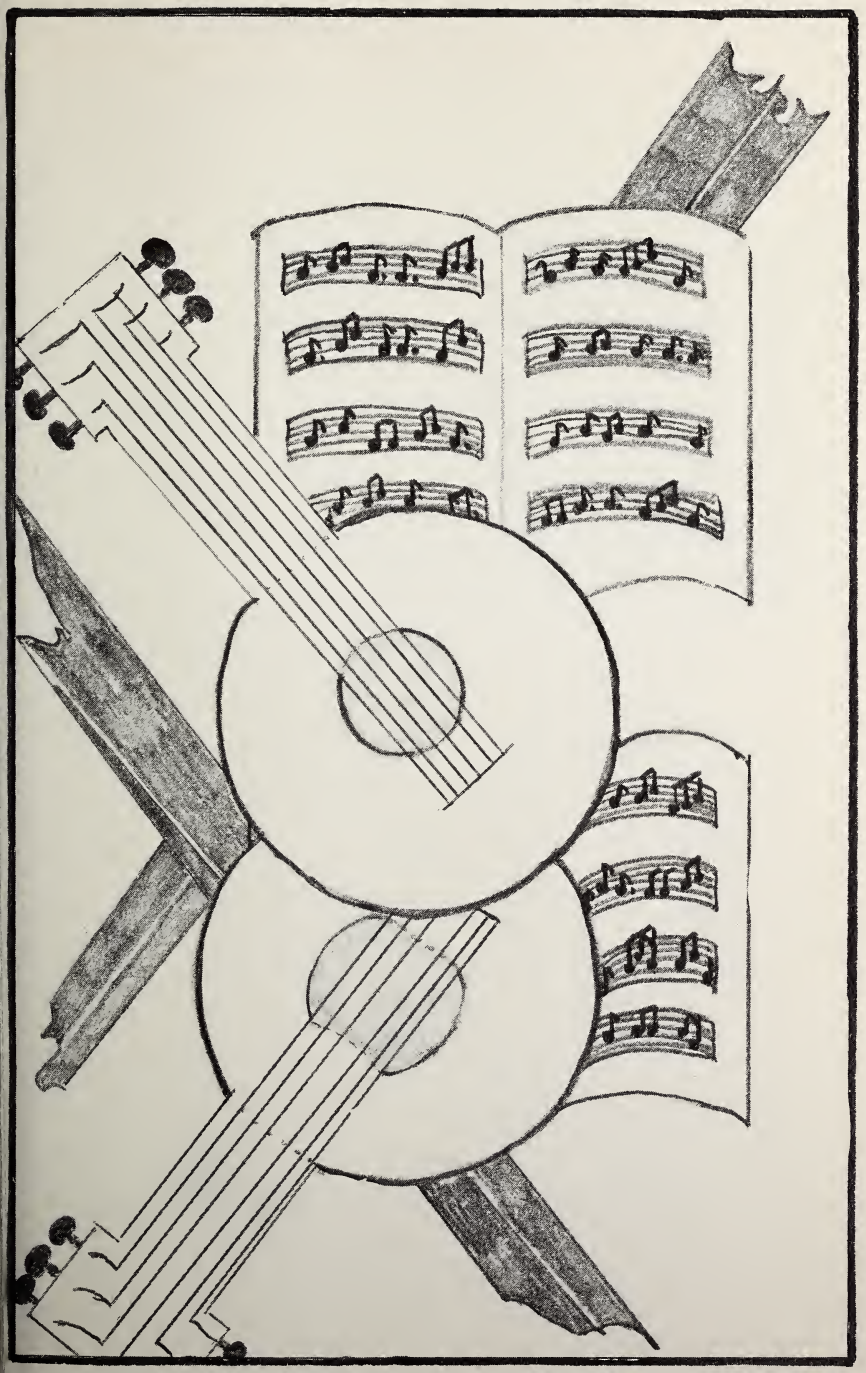
In stately manner thou doest stand,
Inhibited not by weakness or woe
To dream of thyself as a towering man,
As strong as a tree withstands the cold.

But woe unto your folly dreams,
For like natures branches, thou 'canst be
Inhibited not as this tree seems,
To withstand the evils of nature as thou hast seen.

When trials and troubles persecute your soul
As nature violently beats this growth,
Your face displays no countenance of joy,
and your heart grows cold,
But nature's ideal stands guileless,
wrapped in her coat.

This towering stature that thou doest idolize
Was made to withstand such torrid ordeals,
But, you my wordly man, were not made to symbolize
God's creation kept unique by nature's seal.

Weep not cause thou art but a man
You're God's creation, a part of his plan.
Nature's ideal of longevity can withstand,
But thou can express thyself, cause thou art a man.



Holding my head high
shouting green
leaves
my green leaves are alive
bursting with buds
blooming with flowers.

Aging, maturing
the sun is taking over
scorching the tallest
of my branches.

I'm thirsty
It never rains
the grass beneath my feet is dying.

Yet proud arrogance
Orange, red and gloriously yellow
My colors are breathtaking.

But where are you going
my friends
to die?

I am naked — I feel no warmth.
Don't leave me.

ANOTHER GIMMY

I had been moulded by my wife ever since our marriage, two years ago, like a lump of putty. Yet I must admit I never interfered with her creative ability. She has given me everything I have always wanted.

The other week she became intolerant with my inability to see her point of view. Resultingly, yesterday, she poked me in the head with two of her fingers. I now have two eyes with which to see – and it was only today I viewed my first point.

David Cress (G.I.)

1+2+3+4=10

The night calls
Cricket chirps
Soothing.

Tea: a blissful feeling
trickling down the throat
steaming . .

A bend of the neck
Glancing skyward
The leaf mosaic of tall oaks
is more than arabesque.

Cockleburrs
tangled in the furry ears
of an Irish setter
are carefree.

Blackbird splashing
in the concrete waterbath
knows of nothing man-made . .

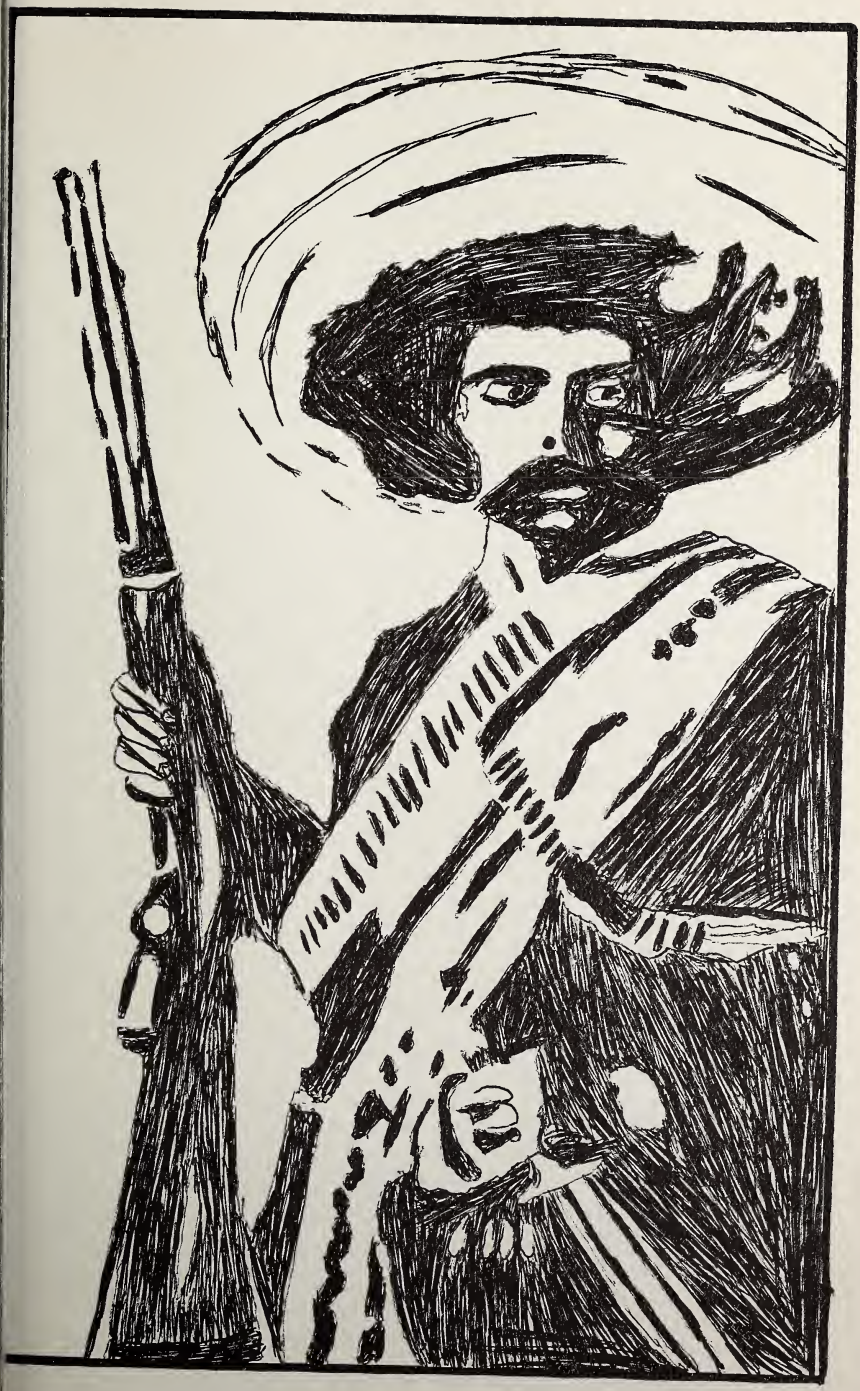
Summer's air brushing
a mountain bald . .

The ringing of the word
in my ears
ceases the pain
of my every mortal fibre.

A brief course on life in the Tao--
On any occasion
before you think:
look

The morning moon
captured in the sun's golden web
disappears into the cornflower blue sky
like an ice cube melting on boiling black pavement.

6:4:3
ring forth the music of the spheres
O, Pythagoras
pluck the strings of the lyre!



'MEXICO, THE FROZEN REVOLUTION REVISITED'

Shadows upon the grass
are part of the trees
as are the leaves

the leaves fall
once in a year,
the shadows have no time

SNOW back 1913

People back home seen snow come

seen times colder

seen times the creeks froze over

all winter

they seen snow

they know about it, go about it

in a practical way;

walk to the barn,

ankle-deep

and pigeon-toe back in their tracks

Saint Know Moon
Geesh

The city a bruising sleek.
Carflesh.
Rides my soul to sears.

STORM

I am Ill.

They say it is
a temporary Illness . . .
But,
It's winter and it's sleeting outside.

I see nine windows
Three on three on three, and a door.
The sky is ill lit and close;
The rain continues.

The garish night lights burn;
Cars pass.
The lights are blurred in the rain and ice,
And I am Ill.

POUR le MORT d'EZRA P.

Another man done gone
Another man done gone
the words remain
the ideas remain
the problems the same
The young still the tools of the elders
and suffer and die still
still bitterly cry, still
asking for reason: Nil.
No more to view the world and think
'Ch'e be'a' and see
the wind flow 'cross the lea
though kept in chains, be free,
Though men do say what's right and wrong
It seems the gods oft play along.

Ezra:
Was an asylum your asylum
Did you see the world in that world
Were we a kingdom of doldrum
And you loved us – how come?

WORDS AT PLAY

Me Self, being, frustrated
over Rene Descartes' immoral words
"Egg noggum, you floggum"
Me Self, thought,
"Sum yokel musk'ee alf bean, with all dewy respites, i dot'ee ever egg-zisted."
Yet he laughs last. . .western clockwork is based upon his plastic orange, which he is not, says he.

'Curtains!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!' silence screams once more,
then gently, lullaby-like

'Once upon a time, dear dear lonely hearts. . . '

BLUE/BLONDE

Little miss bright eyes headin' my way
Doncha want to stick around to make a new day
Take off your shoes and lie in the sun
Life can get you off if you let it be fun.

Sunshine is blonde blonde, glassies glow blue
See if we can make your wishes all come true
Tell me 'bout the people and the places you've seen
Tell me 'bout your life and the things that you've been.

Come a bit closer, give me your hand
Let me tell you what I think you're prettier than
Shoot me out like beams from the deep of your eyes
Lead me on gentle and I'll tell you no lies.

Little miss bright eyes headin' my way
Share me your toys and together we'll play
After all the testing and the questing is done
Love can get you off if you let it be fun.

CREDITS

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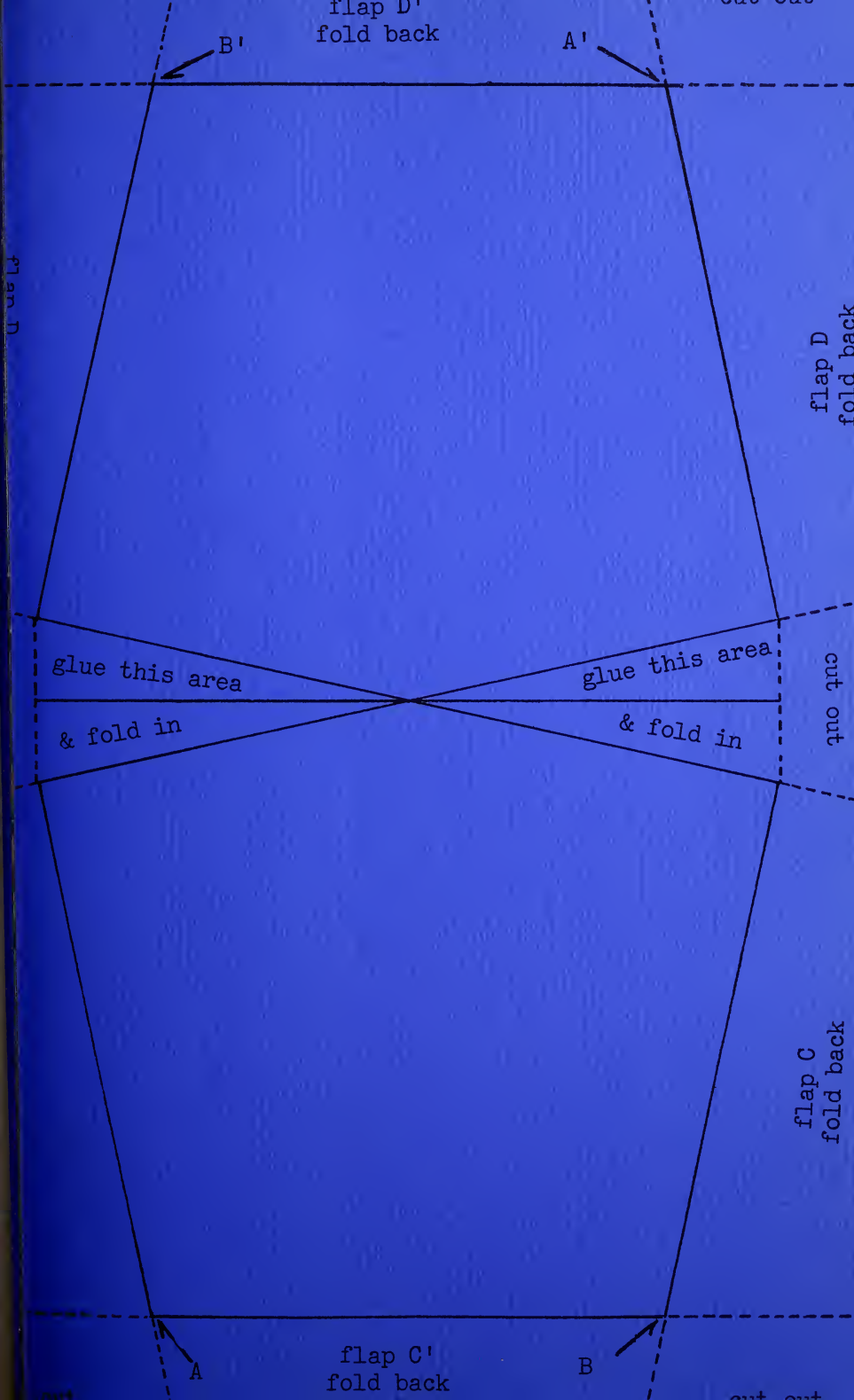
flap D'
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A'
flap D
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glue this area
& fold in
glue this area
& fold in
cut out
flap C
fold back
A
flap C'
fold back
B

JOURNAL

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Post hoc ergo propter hoc

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Slain bulls over backs of kitchen cha
Days end.

FROGS AND POETS

'You can learn as much from a dead
frog as you can from a dead poet.'

Dr. Ray Leonard

Froggie went a-courting and he did ride –
But he ended up in formaldehyde
On the desk of Dr. Philistine,
Who said, "I'll soon know what life means.
I'll open this amphibian
And be as wise as Solomon.
For David's sweet psalms don't say much
Compared to some small creature's guts.
And Shakespeare's sonnets seem insipid
When set beside nice pickled giblets.
My knife does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.
For poems are made with quite limp wrists,
But God creates biologists.
And that's why, froggie, I must cut you."

The ghost of froggie past said, "Fuck you!"

UNDER GLASS

The sign read "PETS." I could see it easily over the maze of aisles from the corner labeled "Frames." The signs were cut with a few simple curves, resembling a bloated colonial shingle. Several ranks of cardboard masterpieces leaned against the wall in uneasy random. In their sparsely guilded frames, they stood like the evening theatre line. A clerk passed silently in front of his gallery. His faceless shoes were resoled with soundless rubber. His lips were bent, perhaps to replace the harsh authority which no longer spoke from his step. He still seemed to listen for the applause of each heel as he stepped safely into the darker tiles.

I moved to the counter behind him, attracted by the shine of the small glass frames. The tinnish frames were assorted in a bin. I amused myself by flipping the frames towards me, enjoying the reflected streak of the long neon bulbs. After snapping each frame, I quickly shifted my head so that the price tag blotted my reflected left eye.

One brand came with the portrait of a young woman enclosed. Her pale, bluish face gazed toward the ceiling, revealing a neck which was pitifully tender. I longed to soothe it. The neon glare exposed an obscene, streaked haze which marred the nameless face.

Groping along the endless walls and across the puppeted windows, my eyes found "PETS" between two hanging check-out signs. I focused myself on "PETS." The counters began to slide by. The shelves melted into a blur of glittering cellophane pastels.

"PETS" was lost in the center of its sign. It seemed on the verge of crawling to the edge and curling into a corner. "HARDWARE" hung comfortably on the opposite wall. Its implements of steel and rubber mingled in my head with the thick, grainy animal scents. The flourescent ceiling gave the air a tangible whiteness. The polished cages climbed the cinderblock wall. The aquariums were nearly empty. The lights hummed and blinked nervously, and the fish.

There were no clerks here. A splotched checklist over the sink gave warnings and maintainence procedures to be performed daily and weekly to maintain the quality of the merchandise. Beneath the sink were two green plastic wastebaskets. A newspaper from the bird cages had been folded and dropped into one of them. The bottom of a gray face smiled through the caked green residue. The other container sprouted transparent veins which breathed into the shadowed water. A layer of dingy orange twisted below the surface. Thin foam collected near the edge.

The bird cages were stacked in a case resembling a meat locker with glass doors. Above one door a sign in smoothly curved lettering suggested "Give the Living Gift." One survived. I leaned against the case with naive intentions of easing his fate with a whistle. It stared at me, songless. A crust had grown over one eye and onto the beak. The bird twitched away. It stumbled off the perch onto the gravel
and stood facing the corner.

WHERE TRUTH LIES

A ford went by with ford written on it
A war went by with peace written on it

Used to where high goes logos
Now the facts are who knows

However now more than ever
Lies are told truthful clever

Maybe all is as seams splitting

STONING CATS

Stoning cats is slow –
like slugs on glass –
once the first stone
is slung,
and you 'n' your partner have had a few hits
you won't let the cat out of the bag.

Stoning cats is like
shooting bats in a closet –
draw a direct hit,
hand your partner the idea.

Direct hits scare a cat –
his eyes swollen
to puzzled holes in his head.

"We private printers have formed a casual association in which we send each other samples of our wares." "Interesting," I smiled. "Yes, aren't they." He returned a sharklike grin. "This little display has a point. I have word that you sometimes dabble in the literary arts when you're not loafing behind the desk and pretending to shelve books. As you know, we're moving into the new library this summer. So I want you to compose me a panegyric, sort of a Librariad, about the launching, if you will, of the new library." "Really?" "Yes. So get back out to the desk and throw away that magazine. Get to work composing me a poem. Chop Chop." Slightly dazed by this premptory commission, I returned to my post. I grabbed a pencil (so I could erase my mistakes) and started scribbling on a legal pad:

They wielded picks, they hefted spades
They unearthed ground beneath the blades
Of grass which for years lay fallow
They even had a priest to hallow
The plot on which would rise, a dream
In one man's brain that for years teemed
And at last would reach fruition
As did Einstein's of nuclear fission, etc.

I continued in this vein for about five legal size pages. After a couple of hours, I grasped my poem in expectant, sweaty hands and dashed towards Sorenson's office. "Here it is," I said breathlessly. "I did it all without even a Thesarus or a rhyming dictionary." He took it judiciously from my hand and leaned back in his chair. A few moments of musing produced a chuckle and at last he peered at me wryly. "This sounds like the Marylandiad," he said. "The what?" I asked. "Haven't you ever read John Barth's Set Weed Factor?" "No." "Then do. It's down there in the stacks, oh, in the 800 section. Look it up and read it. You'll like it." "I'll do it if I get a chance," I said. "But what about my epic?" "You know what I'm going to do with it?" he asked. "I'm going to have it preserved in the archives. Yes. Just like all the other items of historical interest. Like the spats that Dr. MacFergus wore. They're down there, and his cane, too." "Historical interest?" I must have sounded wounded. "Yes. I'm not really qualified to judge it's literary merit. Nice rhymes, though, if you want a layman's opinion. How you worked 'gazebo' in there I'll never figure out." Inconsolable, I returned to the National Geographic. I had not lost my place.

VII

Pilfering through the drawers of the circulation desk, I discovered an essay. It must have been written by a fellow employee whom I hadn't met. Written in a clear hand, it carried the signature of Alec Overplaine. Before looking at the grade, I read it. Overplaine had examined the myth of Aleeste, his thesis concerning the human idee fixe of incest. For a freshman, I judged, the paper exhibited great talent. Then I glanced at the grade. 'D'. Once I read the name of the professor, I understood. Professor Hiller struck fear into the hearts of all freshman English students. A devout disciple of Pound, he attempted to put the master's theories into practice with the students as victims. Hiller stressed content above style to such an extent that if a student submitted a bald copy of the work assigned, he would get an 'A'. I silently commisserated with Overplaine.

Thinking the problem of his identity over, I at last placed him. He worked in the cataloguing department with Mrs. Giddy. Giddy always came to work in mini-skirts, and, since women were such a rarity on campus, attracted a loyal male following. Her tiny office ran with animated conversation from nine till five. I seldom exchanged word with her, my only contact consisting of the time she gripped my shoulders as we both descended the stairs to prevent me from looking up her dress. Anyway, Alec inhabited the office too. He was a wiry fellow of medium height who bore a striking resemblance to Richard Benjamin the actor. Nevertheless, aside from swift glances at him coming and going from his office post with Mrs. Giddy, I never found a chance to collar him. But evidence of presence became unavoidable.

Through the college newspaper, I was able to sample the style of Overplaine. I myself had taken a fling at college journalism, receiving raised eyebrows for my little essays about castrated statues. But Alec had a wider range and a flair for the popular that I lacked. Indeed, within the year, he became the toast of the college with his cultural reports and coverage of the student assembly. His traces, if not his presence continued to dog me. Thinking that I remained the only Proctor student ever to read Petronius, I fondled the copy on the shelf, savoring the better passages. Replacing it, I looked at the check-out card in the back. It carried the flourished signature of Alec Overplaine. Resentful that I could no longer claim a unique appreciation of Roman bawdy stories, I returned to the desk and sulked. After this incident, I searched avidly through other books of esoteric interest that I had read looking for his co-signature. The pattern emerged. Everything from Boethius to Rimbaud was affixed with his mark. My secure world of intellectual snobbism began to crumble. Feeling threatened, with the knowledge that I could never produce his prodigious newspaper output, I retired from the staff and concentrated on literature.

Alas, Overplaine made inroads in that field too. I had surprised myself by winning the Ball-muth Poetry contest in my first attempt. With redoubled furor, I churned out near epic-verse, intent upon stifling all threats from the new adversary. However, my efforts could have been better directed, as the sharpest competition came not from Overplaine, but from Tim Marion. Known as Brother Tim, Marion floated about campus in the flowing vestments of a priest. Naturally, he wasn't a priest, but the mystique of the calling so overpowered him that he could not resist the costume. Tim and I had been acquainted since the tenth grade. He arrived in history class one day and the teacher announced that an Ohio Yankee was among us. We gaped at his sweater over a white shirt and tie, something seldom seen around the school. Marion could not wear a priest costume around high school without violating the dress code, so he stuck to his tie and sweater. He quickly ingratiated himself with the influential people, running the gamut from monthly newspaper to annual literaty magazine to Latin club. Throughout high school, I did nothing. Shunning human company, I looked with awe at those who indulged in what the yearbook called Activities. When everybody else had a neat little list of Activities under their picture in the yearbook,I had nothing. Thus, when the school magazine refused to print my timid poems, I conceived monumental contempt for such endeavors. When the magazine appeared and was even praised in the local newspaper, I detested those who had appeared in it, including Tim. Both of us had decided to go to.Proctor College, and things changed. In the all-male atmosphere, I found myself less apt to fits of violent paranoia. These fits were manifested by a general disintegration of motor responses, except one, when in a girl's presence. The lack of girls at Proctor thus cleared up this condition. An established poet, Brother Tim confidently entered the competition. Yet, when informed of the result, he did not behave as I would.

As I was checking out to him for the tenth time "Life's Great Religions of the World", he casually piped, "Oh, yes, John. Congratulations on the contest." "Gee, thanks, Tim", I lowered my head modestly. His obligations disposed of, Tim clasped the volume to his copious chest and left. I stared at his socks, since I seldom saw them when he wore his cassock. Regretably, they were not eccentric, simple white anklets.

I used to hang around the English department, hoping to soak up some culture. Tim and I frequented the same professors, the aforementioned Dr. Socrates and one recently arrived, Headly Logan. Logan sported a balding pate, lending his forehead a Shakespearean appearance. A medievalist, he had worked on a dissertation about Francis Bacon, but sickened of the latter's cold fish personality. Although a former resident in the Harvard grad school, Logan was lured to Proctor, since the department chairmen venerated the Ivy League. "You know what I did with the manuscript of that damned Bacon dissertation?" he asked a knot of after-class students. He spoke with an accent sprinkled with Anglicisms such as "rum" for room. "I took the insipid thing, shredded it precisely into thousands of fragments like confetti, burned the fragments and pissed on the ashes." Logan then affected nonchalance to our appreciative titters. Another time, excited with a discussion of the English metaphysician Dr. Dee, Logan and Brother Tim fell to discussing curses. I asked a innocuous question, "Prof. Logan why is there such a peculiar significance in the eyes. You know, damn my eyes and so forth?" Logan rubbed his chin as an idea struck him. Impervious to my question, he turned to Tim and said, "You know, Tim, I've encountered some very blasphemous curses in my reading." He had assured us that he could read many arcane languages, including Basque. "Well, Tim," he continued, "Spanish fishermen are famous for their blistering language. In fact, Spanish curses are the most explicit and blasphemous in the world. You know such common ones as "sangre de cristo" etc.?" Tim nodded. "It so happens that Spanish fishermen have some particularly colorful ones about the Blessed Virgin." Logan was Cathloic, having grown up in New Orleans, and thus shared that ecclesiastical affinity with Tim. Then, turning to the rest of the company he warned, "If any of you are particularly devout, please leave the room. What I'm about to repeat will offend you." We looked at each other, none of us willing to admit a weak stomach. "All right," said Logan, "here goes." An expectant glow came into Tim's eyes. "Among many, the most expressive I've encountered is "by the unfucked mother of jesus christ" and "by the hymen of the unravished blessed virgin". Tim chuckled and I went along. Since the crowd consisted of Methodists and Baptists, nobody was obviously offended. But I wondered at the complicity of Tim and Logan, both Catholics, enjoying such inside jokes.

VIII

Due to my upperclassman status, I seldom encountered Overplaine in class. Thus, I was reduced to collecting rumors about him to supplement my meager personal impressions. Overplaine did not discount these stories, and in fact, by a judicious raising of the eyebrow, encouraged them. It so happened that I wound up in an English class with him at last. We signed up for the aforementioned Poundian, Prof. Hiller's Comparative Lit. I was in my usual punctual seat as Alec rushed in breathless and took a seat behind me. He wore his standard white shirt with frayed cuffs. Unlike Tim, he did not, through necessity, indulge in sartorial splendors. The chatter in the classroom died down as Prof. Hiller stalked in. Hiller

never deigned to slouch, like most professors. Stalking in, Hiller approached the blackboard accusingly and scrawled in large letters, SHIT. A barely audible gasp arose from the students. Before we could collect our wits, Hiller barked, "I trust most of you, at this stage of your academic careers, can read. No doubt, you have also daubed this phrase on many and sundray otherwise innocent walls and toilet cubicles. My purpose is to pound it into your skulls that you, too, can be able to distinguish between shit and literature. It will be no easy task, as most of your reading consists of Master Plots at best and Classics Illustrated at worst. There will be no particular text in this course, but a series of solid works of art, derived from any times and cultures. Again, many, alas of you cannot relate to other times and cultures. Therefore, I shall attempt to illustrate the quality and timelessness of the works of art through the simplest method possible, the paraphrase and parable. Like Christ, I know that I cannot convey to you in complex terms complex modes of thought. Thus, I am compelled to reduce these complex modes into near pablum, so that the densest among you can obscurely divine the glimmer of truth. I trust that you have already acquired your copies of the first work we are going to study, Dante's "Divine Comedy". Let's begin." We grasped our copies. Looking behind my shoulder, I saw that Alec furrowed his brow, and that he had no copy of the "Divine Comedy". With his intensely flickering gaze, Hiller discovered Alec's shortcoming. "Alec," he said coaxingly, "I cannot help but notice that you alone lacke the necessary text. Rather than hear your patently specious excuse, just let me ask this. Why? Are you going to quote from memory?" Alec hesitated before replying. "No, Prof. Hiller, I don't have the atrocious translation that you suggested. And yes, I can quote quite accurately long passages of the "Inferno" from memory." Hiller smiled coldly. "And which translation do you feel is superior to this one?" Alec looked at him with equanimity. "You have heard of Geoffrey Chaucer? It is my contention that his version of the "Inferno" is the most felicitous one in existence." "I could give you some prominent scholars who would dispute that," Hiller said, "But I won't. I have a duty to perform, other than conducting this sophomoric debate with you." "But I am a sophomore," Alec said, poker-faced. "True, Alec, and your tactics point that out. So if you do not wish to assume my place and teach the class from your own rich background, please sit down." Alec made a move to go to the front of the classroom. Then he stopped. "A gesture is often more eloquent than anything words can say," Alec said, "but I will not confine myself to gestures. I can tell immediately that you have no appreciation for Dante or any other classic. Through your simplified methods, you would have us believe that the actual inferno was nothing more than the flame of an acetylane torch. You would tell us that Beatrice is simply the poet's hyperbolic description of a co-ed. You would compare the dilemma of Dante in his middle age to that of a constipated English professor. I cannot tolerate any more of this pretentious posturing. You, sir are an ass! and besides, Pound couldn't even write good Italian!" With that, Alec marched out. Hiller looked where Alec had been. He dismissed the class.

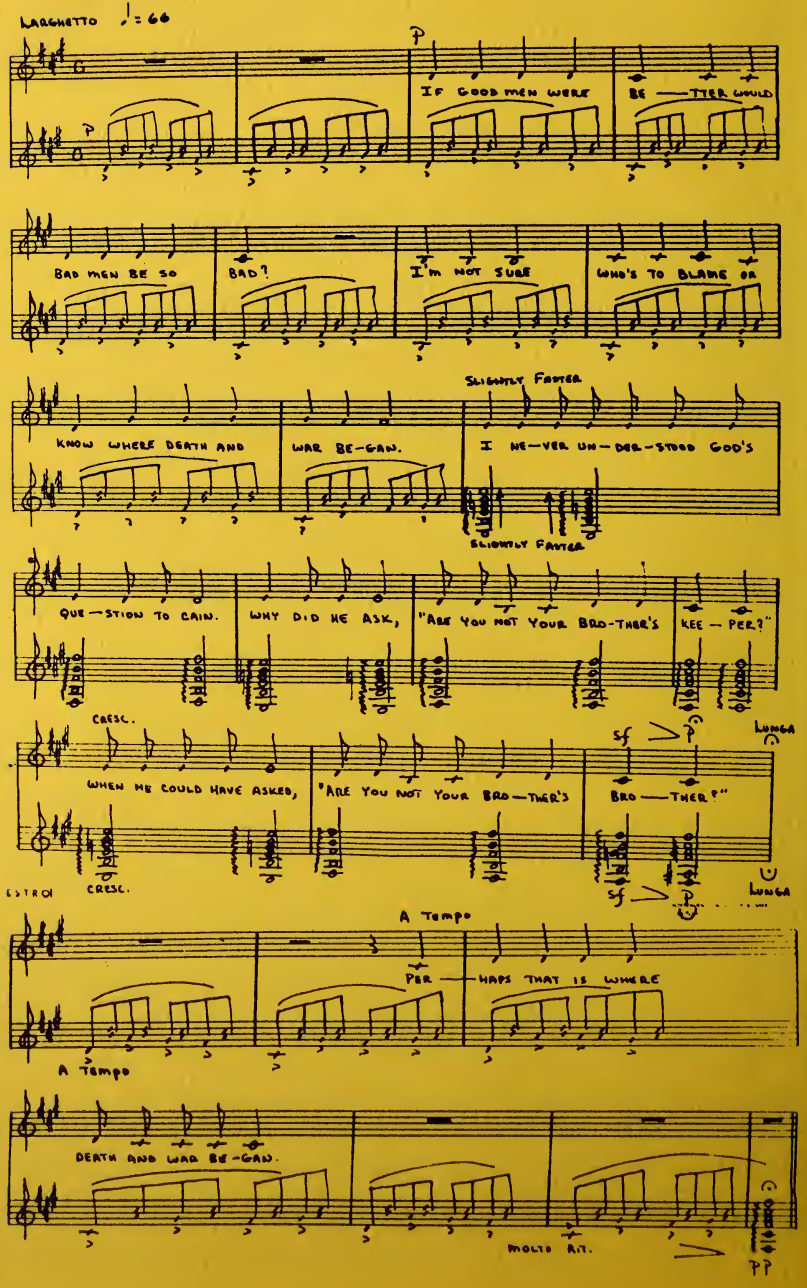
X

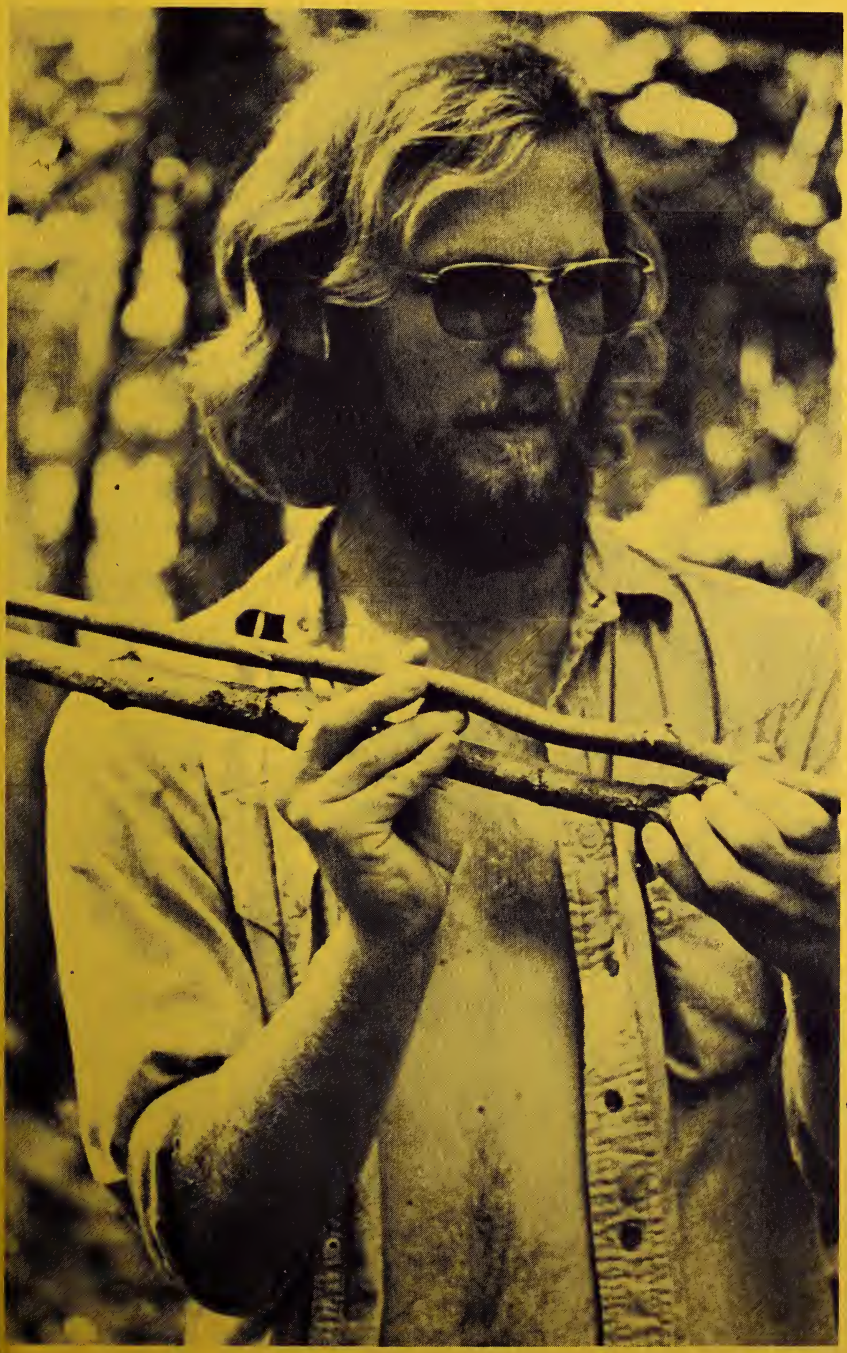
Although the library had been occupied for some months, the Dedication Ceremony had not yet taken place. A local millionaire, who gained his lucre through exploiting generations of mill hands, had provided some funds. But other textile millionaires, their envy aroused, offered Soreson fat recompensense if he would consent to the name of the library being changed to conform with that of the patriarch of their family. Never one to pass up a buck, Sorenson

consented. So it was announced that the Proctor library would be rechristened the Gaber Szathmary Memorial Library. The name stood out in an area where things were named after Anglo-Saxon Civil War heroes. A Saturday for the festivities was set aside. Sorenson told me to come to work in a coat and tie. I put on my standard sports coat and hooked a tie into my collar. The library sported sprays of bouquets throughout. The janitor busied himself by unfolding funeral parlor chairs in an assembly area. I pinned a name card to my lapel, since the student staff were commanded to conduct guided tours for the benefit of visitors. A nervous Sorenson greeted me, mopping his brow. "John, straighten that tie. Smile. Give us a good image." I complied. Seldom had I seen him in a state of agitation not occasioned by me. He fiddled with the bouquets and ran his finger along the desk top for dust. "Run upstairs," he barked, "and get the periodicals in order." I ran upstairs. Free of his gaze, I went though the motions of organizing the magazines and newspapers. When a particular item caught my eye, I did not hesitate to sit down and peruse it. Looking at the clock, I saw that the time for opening the library was approaching. Shambling back downstairs, I found Alec behind the desk, sporting a navy blue blazer decorated with a name tag. "Hello, Alec," I muttered. "So you're a tour guide too?" "I consider it demeaning, but I need the money," he said. When Sorenson turned his back, Alec plucked a boutonierre from a nearby bouquet. The VIPs had not yet begun to arrive, but a trickle of parent-types and relative-of-student types came in. "Listen, Alec," I confided, "I'm kinda embarrassed with all these gawkers. Why don't you lead the first group?" With a sniff, Alec consented. He strode over to a group gathered around a photographic display. "Let me introduce myself," he announced. "I'm Alec Overplaine, your tour guide. I see some of you reaching for your purses, but don't. It's free. If you'll all form a little line, I'll place myself in the fore. There. Let's keep order please, and no straggling. Don't touch anything without my permission. Ready? The wonders of modern bibliography shall be spread before your amazed eyes. Don't hesitate to ask questions." In good order, they followed Alec downstairs.

When my turn came to give a tour, I lacked the sang-froid of Alec. Whereas his tourist behaved docilely and humbly thanked him for his troubles, I got the surly bunch. Old women and little girls, their bladders weakened by the excitement in store, incessantly bombarded me with whispered queries as to the location of the ladies' room. Fed up with this request, I made signs which pointed to the hygienic facilities. I taped these signs to the bannisters. Before the VIPs arrived, however, Sorenson removed them, professing that they exhibited bad taste. Noon approached. Long black cadillacs pulled up before the entrance. According to Sorenson's ingratiating expression, the Szathmary family had arrived. He rushed to the door and started to pump the hands of the dignitaries. I studied the textile scions with a practiced eye. Unlike their American counterparts, who mingled with stiff bonhomie, the Szathmary clan displayed a mitteleuropean exuberance. The squat swarthy men all had statuesque blondes on their arms. The women shook hands and the men kissed. I had the impression of being at a convention of gypises dressed in $300 suits and mink coats. A wizened little man with gold teeth and rings on every finger, including his thumbs, shyly approached me behind the desk. "May I have a program, pliz?" I told him that he could have as many as he wanted. To my surprise, he gathered about thirty and placed them in his coat pocket. He winked. "These I will send to my relatives in the old country. They will never believe that me, a humble Hungarian, could have become a success in Amerika. Those schleppers in Budapest. Will Uncle Sol be surprised." Later, I discovered that he was the patriarch of the family. Various local officials wandered among the Szathmarys, grateful for the tax revenue bestowed upon the town by the textile enterprises. During the speeches, I studied the women in fur coats.

IF GOOD MEN WERE BETTER © 1969





HOG–BOSCH

flute-fiddled ass
like spoon in a glass
of water
is not where it seems
to be pumping (cheeks)
atonal air
sharps and flats

Hieronymus, you fart

SCRAP MEtal

I feel like a junkyard in springtime
Who wanting to look nice, looks bad
And out of such failure to be good
Winds up feeling more and more sad

The weeds have grown over my feelings
The rust eats away at my soul
My heart has been wrecked in the past time
My headlights are yellow and old

There's junk piled around where life should be
Useless hulks taking up all the space
Out of all of the models I've handled
'Was not one I could look in the face

I feel like a junkyard in winter
Cold and barren and useless to all
But if you ever need any spare parts
Come on over or give me a call.

THE HANDS OF RUBEN ST. JULIAN MEREE

His hands were crumpled as if the bones were too big for his skin. The skin looked like it had been stretched out on a rack to be dried by the sun as though it were an animal hide. The fingers bent only at the joint where the fingers and palm meet. They could only bend three fourths of the way into making a fist. These hands had kept him alive all ninety years of his life.

The backs of his hands were full of deep blue blood vessels that you could mash like you mash a balloon filled with just enough air to keep it from being limp. The skin itself was embedded with thousands of cracks - not necessarily looking like wrinkles. You could rub these cracks out and make the skin very smooth-satiny.

His fingers were long and thick like they had once been very strong hands. His nails were not short but long and kept. They were very hard nails stained yellow from tobacco.

The palms were a light pink as opposed to the ruddy almost dirty color of the rest of his hand. He had a scar on his left palm where a wart or something of the sort had been burned off. The lines of his fate seemed very distinctly cut into his skin. Strangely enough, his life line stopped just before the edge of his thumb.

ANNA
ANNA

ANNA

for mee familee

ALONG the Southern shores of this
land there nudges a shrimp boat.
The *Anna* she is so-called and painted
with crisp jet letters on her fading side.
When night comes , she is moored
alongside an unsteady dock;
boat and wharf sway a bit slower
than the dancing, encircling marshland.
Insect sentinels take up active
vigils under the cover of darkness and
the whispering forest spirit, whose
chants change star gazing through the
net to sidelong eye-arguments.

Rivulets of awakened current
tremble behind the *A nna;*
water-children going
to the tide playground.

Day is coming, the sun is rising;
A nna heeds the molten call again.
She will work under and with
warm, enveloping light.

The Shrimp Say:
Brothers from the North
may come and go,
But we with drawling scales
Scriggle far too slow.

ANNA is also the name of a light-heavy
star. The way it is with
many stars, there they are way up
high; very large circles of energy
and light. Anna is not listed on the
astronomers' charts, she can't
be seen with a telescope. Instead,
Anna radiates through her glance.
In her smile are oceans,
penetrating seaspray heartnotes.
Snow may reflect the sky's sun well,
but Anna is a beacon from the
shadowless flame.

OCEANS are the common bond enjoining
these two namesakes. As a fishing
boat throbs slowly over the open sea,
Anna sails the ocean of love,
a vessel of tenderness and excitement.
Beside the clear picture of her heart,
everything else fades away with the
Sun and ebb at day's end.

ANNA

12-18-72

This crazy streetcar will not
slow down. I'm due for lunch
with Simone et Jean-Paul at
eight. . .
and this beau-hemian
facing me thinks he's
a philosopher incognito.
Well, the only sure thing is: if
the conductor notices Mt. Kilimenjaro
protruding from my suitcase, we're
in for it.

BIRTH NAPKIN POEM

for Dmitri Sonovabitch

That sound the instant of birth
of gnats dropping
all the way from Argos
to Big Sur —
like flapjacks hitting a griddle.

A preacher sits licking his leg
and reads the obituary
to a pre-menopause mother
whose husband (my father) Aegistheus,
has splattered like the gnats.

My mother's womb
was lined with daggers.

Was that a narrow escape!

the charlatan's face
bit the tangarine and drooled
a viscous smile unintended
but irretrievable
carried by the smoke rings
it dripped in my eyes
and mingled with his reeking
joie de vivre and
sentimental verities
I was choking in ether
and had to climb out

SPEAKING OF TONGUES

We are passing the graveyard,
like we do everyday,
and it is burning.
The grass and trees are being
raped by fire,
even the tombstones are aflame—
like a painting by Magritte.
And we are walking by the graveyard,
watching it burn. Wondering,
'Why is the cemetary on fire?:

There are no fireman and
no one sees.
We pass and I want to starve the flames,
they are turning the sky into a gutter
the smoke is gobbling the blue.
But we are passing the graveyard
and it is burning.

NUMBER NINE

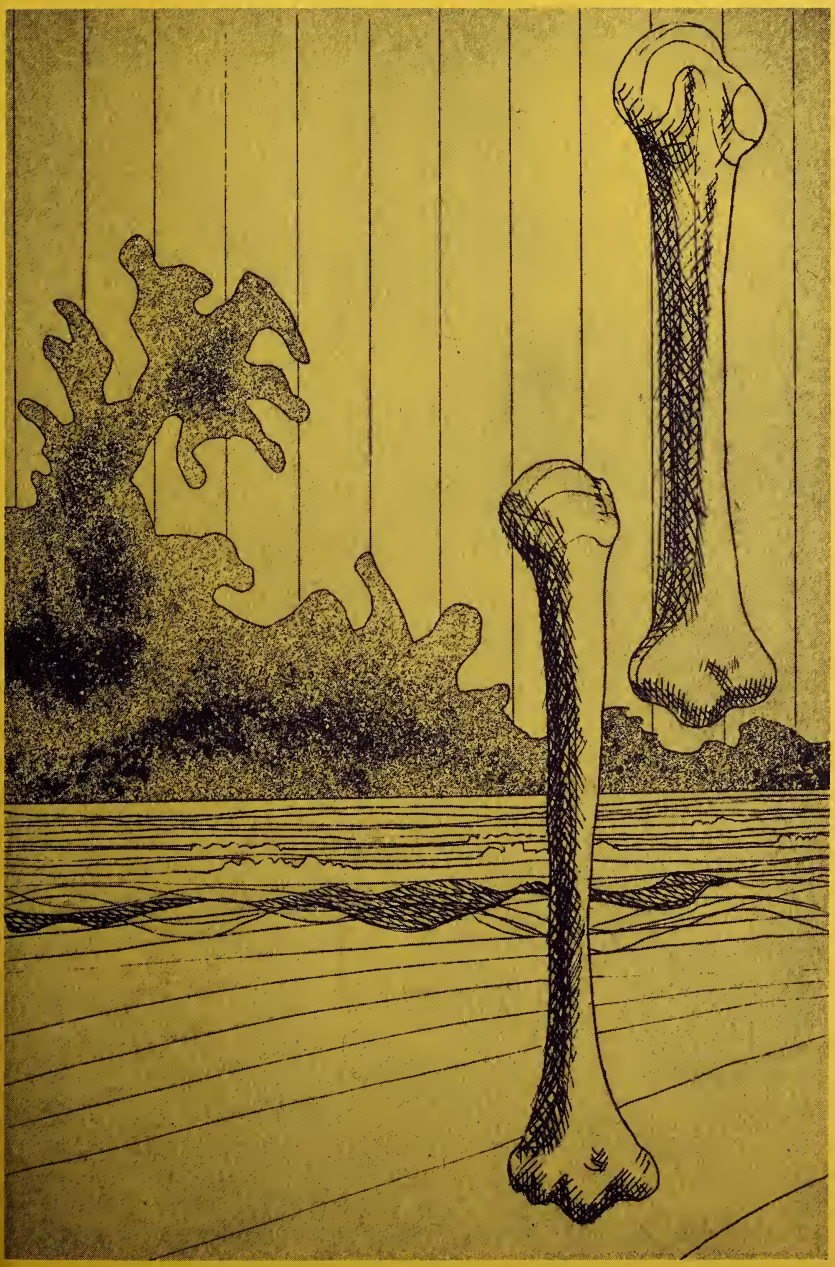
Saint valentine
where do you live?

not on that day
but on the other days

is there a limit, dear saint
to your power?
or is that power
gauged and cannonized
through brothers and kings
and saintly things like
death
valentine,
two faced cupids assault the world!
secure your stately magnet
and travel with me

ride with me through parades
travel with me to campaigns
march with me to humanity
and plead your sweet
Be Mine.

and pray dear saint
for Christopher . . .
and perhaps he'll pray for you.



THIS TIME PASSED

After all this time passed, I came to see you again
I remember the night was powerful black
With no moon, but just some separated stars
struggling through the dark aboveness
Your doorbell glowed dimly my only beacon
As I charted my path to your port
Pushing the note and hearing the flourish within,
I only had time to step back
before
You swung open your smile with the door and in lessthanaminute were
gone
And as I shivered back to my car chased by a league of leaves
I wondered if you were colder than the wind

After all this time passed, I came to see you again
I remember the afternoon was weakly gray
With no movement, but for faded, ancient leaves
ruefully rustling across the yard
Your hill steadily pushing me along
As I shuffled my shoes to your porch
Opening the screen and hearing a bark within,
I only had time to wipe my feet
before
You swung open your arms and in lessthanaminute
brought me home
And as we shivered around the sidewalks chasing an army of acorns
I wondered if you were older than then

1.0.1

THE PROOF'S IN THE PUDDING, ANSELM

Well, here we are gathered around this table loaded down with such delicious foods. And I've been asked to ask the blessing – ask the blessing – ask the blessing? I guess that means I'm supposed to ask God to make this food o.k. – spiritually, I reckon, or maybe decontaminate it. Can't chance to choke on unblessed food.

What would happen if we didn't ask for your blessing, God? What does it feel like to choke on unblessed food? More painful than choking on blessed food? Ridiculous! Everybody knows by now that askin' your blessing ain't going to change the chances of our windpipes getting clogged up. Maybe it really means that if we don't remember to ask for your blessing, we're going to forget you gave it to us. If we did that we'd soon degenerate into Godless people. So, bless us and keep us from becoming Godless and unhappy people.

Now here we are, a bunch of people who don't want to be Godless, getting ready for a fine meal – and asking your blessing for it, God. But I suppose it still might be just as good, or better, to thank you for this food. Don't most of those long blessings say something about you having given it to us in the first place? Well shoot, you ain't going to poison us, are you God? So I'm just going to thank you for this tasty dinner, these friends, and the fact taht I got so much to be thankful for.

So thank you.

You . . . God? You God?

Are you God that I'm thanking? Or are you somebody else? I don't want to offend you either way. But I don't suppose you really care what we call you anyway, as long as its you we're thanking. I mean if I helped somebody and they said 'Thank you Jack', I'd feel just as thanked as if they'd used my name. I mean Jack couldn't even feel thanked.

But what if what I've been thinking of as God just doesn't exist the way I've been thinking of him? Who have I been thanking? I've been meaning to thank a man – God. But if you're a woman – God that's just the same to me. And if you don't like the name God just pretend I've been using your real name. That's o.k. with me. Even if I say, 'Thank you, God', us two'll know that I mean to be thanking you . . . Sir, Joe, Almighty or whatever.

Of course some people say you don't exist no matter what I call you – be it God, Allah, or George Washington. Maybe so . . . maybe not. It kind of scares me, but I ain't sure either way. How am I to know?

One thing I am sure of is that I do feel mighty lucky to be where I am and even luckier to feel like I do. And if it's God, I'll thank God. And if he's not responsible for all I got then my thanks goes to what is.

If I'm a fool for being like this then I'm thankful for being a fool. If it's some element of society that allows us to be here like this . . . some element like love . . . then I'm thankful for love. Whatever causes me to be able to enjoy this meal and let me watch my kids grow up from snatching things to passing the best piece of chicken to me, then I want to hereby acknowledge that 'whatever' with my thanks. I that's not enough it'll just have to do . . . till I know what is enough.

Let's eat!

Amen.

STEINWAY & SONS – for J. Stone

I chanced upon
a girl wrestling a Steinway.
Notes dripped from the walls
of the concert hall
like Grendel's blood –
After a resounding triumph
we went out for pizza.

Halfway through the mushrooms
the piano gladiator asked,
"What do you think of me?"
"You should honor the old masters more."

After two Cokes and lots of thought
she confided
"Y' know what I found out last year . . .
People are important to life."

IT IS NICE NOW

I am selfish.
I am happy, but happier still
when I am close to you,
In the dark with one unshoed leg entwined with yours
and my hand softly on your tender breast.
I search for your mouth and find it, innocent but ready.
I wait to be disillusioned.
I wait for when I go to you
with sadness
in your eyes
for me.

It is nice now for me
and,
it is nice now for you.
So close your eyelids,
yet not your eyes
(to see me love you).
and lean on my soul. . .
and tomorrow we shall cry softly.

SKIN POEM

She wore a cherry red raincoat
hugged around her body like a straightjacket
and the rain had turned her hair to licorice.
There were maroon conchs in the sand,
like unpeeled apples in a fallen pie
and I almost offered her one.
But that raincoat –
it stuck to her body like a big wet leaf,
like sunglasses disguising a voice,
like a bandanna shouting "Deliver!"
The beach was bare when she took it off
and became Venus de Milo, starfish regenerated,
her skin as white as the sand,
her nipples as red as the raincoat.

DOG DAYS

One whiff of blood
and a dog's ruined;
for us there is
that first bloody birth
that makes us remember it
evoking a nostalgia
that makes us order
rare steak,
carve like animals
blood-thirsty

when dogs run wild
in the street the
only answer to
come here, poochie
is a snarl
and to bite off the hand
at the wrist.

WESTWARD MOVEMENT

(the sun has now eaten up the last
green leaf of winter wheat) the tin
bulk of a 50-pound lard can grins
with wiggler-water, the
swimmerets ply the billows at
the bottom are flakes of rust bits
of shingles from the roof in winter

(when can the day end how
high before giddiness
causes the sun to reel
and fall) at my grandmother's
once cutting apples slicing
the autumn with my hand mixing
the red and golds a clean slice
across the wrists--
but no-- that's not
spring spring

was the time for drowning
kittens in the lard can great
iron bolts tied to the throat they
did not float up at the end

spring gives the meaning to sad
easters and the
hypocrisy of new hats my
pineapple-print shirt in mid-stream
america--what the hell has it
to do with tulips

spring grins to an end like
some tourist his hawaiian shirt finished
face beet-red in the heat walking
into the only town on the
horizon from his car his gasoline
can gangling he
looks down the street (the sun
painted there by van gogh
in red angry strokes) dry gulch
the sign says no one
is left go away
three rattlesnakes
lie dead in the dust bloated
fat and swarming

but what right
has spring to allude to autumn
the gasoline
drenched sun the apples
sliced the rivulet of ooze
red and running down
the back of the hand--and then
the slither of the snakes
in the dust the sheer
horror when it is apparent·
the snakes begin to move in.

PARTIAL REINFORCEMENT

You don't say too much
but i like it when you do
i come back for more

Tired old fisherman
sometimes he feels a nibble
keeps on trying for a catch

HOME

I lit another cigarette
And crossed the silent street
Only to be assaulted
by another endless row
  of weatherworn houses
that someone calls
  home

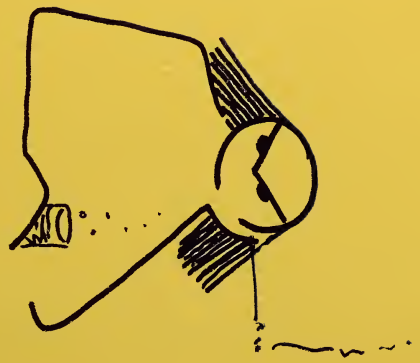
That night the darkness
Was home for me
Comfortable.
Quiet
Easy.

Until the headlights
Crashed through my walls
And splintered every piece of furniture
I ever owned
  or hoped to give away

MAN FROM GIMMY

As I peered down the street, my eye caught hold of a man standing near the door of the Moonlight tavern. The clash of his clothes resembled an Italian sunset that had gone bad. He stood majestically, slowly chewing a large wad of gum. Being of the curious sort, I approached him and asked, "Sir, with your great sexual appeal, why do you waste your time in Blotown?" He looked at me, with a bubble on the rise, and said in an offkey pitch, "Because, my boy, living in Blotown is like taking a mummy to the Pharoah's ball." Seconds later, he swallowed an enormous bubble and gained five pounds.

David Cress and Gimmy International



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Cover, Shades of Medium Blue, *designed by Tom Lentz*
Song, If Good Men Were Better, *is taken from the play* Pumpernickel Ice Cream
'Slain bulls . . .' credit to Clint Sherrill
The 'little man' was created by Mike Calloway

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. cut all dotted lines.
   score* all solid lines.
2. score an imaginary line from corner A to A'
   repeat, from corner B to B'
3. fold all scored lines to one side and then to the other
4. lightly spread glue on the designated area
   and fold the triangles together, causing them to adhere
5. tape over the ends of the glued triangles will add strength.
6. fold back flat both flap C's
   fold back flap C' and glue it on top of the C flaps
7. repeat this procedure with flaps D and D'
8. now, hang or place in a location with light

* score- draw a very dull table knife along the line; this insures a neater fold

possible to lower the saturation of a color by adding its complement, by diluting it with white, or by darkening it with black.

The *value* of a color is its darkness or lightness. If saturation can be assigned positions on black. A bright

Value

Variations in lightness and darkness, called variations in *value*, are used to define shapes, to suggest line, to create the illusion of mass and space on a flat surface, to emphasize certain parts, and to express feeling. Value changes define shapes in Picasso's *Three Musicians* (Fig. 1-14). In Rubens' *Coup de Lance* (Fig. 1-23), he *modeled* with light and shadow, focused atten-

named red and absorbs the others.

The basic color that the artist chooses to give an object is called its *local color*. The artist may emphasize local colors, stress their modifications, or subordinate them to a general effect. The local red of an apple may be modified by reflections from a green tablecloth or by light coming through yellow curtains. By partly subduing local colors, Rembrandt achieved the overall effect of brown-gold light that characterizes many of his works, such as the *Supper at Emmaus* (Plate 3). Matisse, in contrast, retained more local colors (Plate 5).

The word *color* refers to a combination of *hue, saturation*, and *value*. *Hue* is the property that distinguishes one color from another, the property that enables us to name the color. Three hues are especially important because, in theory, they can be mixed to

Come around grandbabies
Piss on the bronze
(nice mouldgreen tint)
for Papa Picasso
he's dead and gone

Deadpossum's jawbone
grimacegrins on
the side of the road.

Ojo !
Ojo !
The bull is down.

JOURNAL

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FOR ME

Look where
beagles leap up friendly
from their porch-sleep, where
pork-rich pintos bubble savory
on backs of stoves, where
fireplace stockings pend in wide-mouthed expectation, where
lamps light red crayolas waxing valentines for
girls too elegant to love.
Look where
tongues hunt pesky popcorn husks
in picture-show dark, where
noses press cold candy-counter glass, where
fingers grub impatient in black mud for fat pink worms, where
ears catch mouth-harp lamentation celebrating Saturday, where
eyes track fast green apples flung through dusk at
too-swift velvet bats.
Look where
country stores squat by crossroads,
hiding garrulous broods of red-neck men
under the shade of their wings, where
churches fold prayer-hands
over the heads of soap-cleansed congregations
and hurl high crosses
onto the cumulus froth.
Look where
clay hills hump their blushing backs
under the quivering portraits of fish-bone ferns, where
suspiring spires of pines
poke heavenward, and over them
hawks swim the wind.

First prize, South Carolina Amateur Poetry Contest;
to appear in the anthology "Patches of Carolina Sun"

WHY I CAME TO AMERICA

With my European background, I meet many other American naturalized citizens. I am a compulsive wonderer, and I wonder about the reasons which led these people to quit their homelands for America.

I have discovered in my long life that most people who came to America were fleeing from something – famine, poverty, Hitler, Communism. Many people believe it is possible to flee from themselves, and they too come to America. America surely has more people who have caught up with themselves than any other country in the world.

A scandal in 1937 forced me to leave Prague when I was still a young man. I was the brutal victim of a weak-hearted woman who wanted to demonstrate her displeasure with her husband. In her own way she was a very ruthless woman.

I was young, only thirty-five, and was an assistant to the owner of a mirror manufacturing company in Prague. This was Bromsk. Bromsk lived only to make money and he had built his large mirror plant from a small affair which his father had turned over to him, into the largest in the country. Daily he dealt with foreign exporters and rich Czech importers, and occasionally he would have the good fortune of conferring with officials of the Ministry of Trade, a great honor for a former apprentice. He was exceptionally happy with all his progress through life and of the station to which he had raised himself.

My life until then had been one of constant drudgery. I was apprenticed at an early age to my father, who made very excellent mirrors, and learned my trade well, as there was no other prospect for me if I did not. When I was still young my father was forced out of business by agents of the larger Bromsk company. They terrorized us at night. The bribed government officials would give us no protection. So my father left Prague for a small city in the south and apprenticed me to a worker in the Bromsk company under a different name. He was too poor to take me. My brother went to work in a small steel mill, but I never saw him again. It was my father's hope that someday I would rise in the company high enough to wreck vengeance on Bromsk. I was more fascinated with Bromsk's success than I was with my own father's failure, so that when he left Prague, his hatred for Bromsk went silently with him.

By the year of the incident that forced me to leave, 1937, I was what the New York want ads today call a "brite young guy w/gd psnlty." Everyone liked me. I worked hard, was friendly, liked people for what they were, but never let them take advantage of me in business, because I had seen what happened to weak businessmen in the vivid picture that still remained of my father's failure. Bromsk liked me as well, and I was rapidly promoted above the others. There was some grumbling because I was so young and because I represented to the older workers in the factory the evils caused when the businessman rises above the craftsman. The attitude of looking at work as business first and a craft second was new then and I was considered by the money-hungry Bromsk to be a good executive type. I had all of the progressive ideas of the times, it is true, and I was glad of it. I did not see clearly what they would lead to, or what people like Bromsk (and myself, I must include myself) would lead to, but I was happy with my strides at the time. I was invited to parties at Bromsk's house and met members of the Nazi party there who talked about the time when they would rule the government. At these parties I began to be looked at by women who were some years older than I. I was pleased by the glances they threw in my

direction, but I was careful not to take advantage of the glances for fear that they would cause bad rumors to be spread about my private life.

When Bromsk's wife died he was sixty-two, but still full of energy. He married a beautiful woman of twenty-four whose name was Dorsna. Many eyebrows were raised when he married a woman thirty-eight years younger than he was, but he didn't care about eyebrows, only their money.

Dorsna Bromsk often came to the factory to see her husband. Men would turn their heads as she passed them to look at her shapely figure and solemnly shake their heads, considering the wives they would go home to at night, and no doubt they thought when she came to the factory that indeed money could buy anything.

I saw her more than most men in the factory because I was Bromsk's assistant and was always in the office when she came by. One day she came sweeping through the door in her elegant French clothes, which were hard to get and even harder to pay for in 1937. I jumped up from my chair and quickly bowed my head. She said to me, "You are very handsome." She was saucy and impudent. I was eleven years older than she.

I said, "Thank you, Mrs. Bromsk."

She was obviously displeased with my formality, and said, "Is my husband in?"

"Yes, Mrs. Bromsk," I said, and she went in. If she had not been Bromsk's wife, I most surely would have been less formal – much less formal that I now find it proper to admit – but I knew Bromsk as a vindictive man.

That same day, when she came out of his office, she had tears in her eyes. But as I stood up for her to pass through my office, she held her head high and tried to remain aloof. Her tears betrayed her real emotions. In some ways she was weak.

She and Bromsk did not get along from the start. They had opposite temperaments. He smoked a vile cigar and she affected a long cigarette holder. Even when he got rich he smoked the same cheap cigars. People said that Dorsna married Bromsk for his money. One man told me that Bromsk had told him in a public square near the stock exchange that he considered his wife a "good buy."

The night that was to ruin me in my homeland began like any other night. It was about eight o'clock on Friday. I had just dressed to go to a city-wide meeting of the secret Nazi party, which met at the end of every work week. Bromsk had insisted I join to demonstrate to them my interest in staying when they engulfed the country. I did not like the Nazi party and their many hatreds, but I was younger then, and weak, and thinking only of myself and my future. It was evil.

I heard a car stop in front of my house. This was a rare sound along my street. No one in the house where I rented a small room had a car. There was a quick knock and I opened the door. The beautiful Dorsna Bromsk stood in my doorway. The tears in her eyes made me forget how astounded I should have been.

I said nothing to her. Suddenly she broke down crying, stumbled into the room and into my arms. I closed the door behind her and took her to a chair at the table. I sat down next to her with my arm around her shoulder. She held her head low and out of the single light on the table that filled the room with shadows. I noticed a cool draught coming from the open door, so I got up and went to close it. The wind was getting up and I thought there might be a thunder storm. I closed the door and went back to Dorsna Bromsk. She looked up to me

with a stream of tears running down her face.

"Can't I be treated like a woman," she cried through her tears, flattening her hands against my chest and burying her head between her arms. I held her wrists and asked her what had happened. She looked up again, lowered her hands. A fire seemed to spread from a fury deep within her to consume her face.

"It's that beast Bromsk. I had an argument with him tonight. I told him he thought more of the Nazi party than he did me. He never spends any time with me, never takes me anywhere. He always has those ugly rough Nazis over to the house and never anyone elegant or cultured. I have to do everything for myself."

She stood and walked to the window. After a moment she turned from the shadows and silently lost her self in the lamps bright center. Her eyes took on that hazy look of the old remembering the mistakes of their youth with mellow regret. Then she looked into my eyes from across the room.

"I told him that a woman must be loved by a man." She had a sorrowful look on her face of a child who is dazed and acts only on instinct. She turned and closed the little curtain on the window and then, with her back to me, she undressed. I can still remember the delicate beauty and sweet pungent smell of her underthings. And she turned.

There was no fat on her lean handsome body. Her legs were thin and graceful. She had small, fine breasts and a smooth neck. She came to me and tenderly placed her arms around my neck and whispered to me, "Please."

And so I kissed her. And I made love to her that night under my heavy warm coverlet – to the woman who desperately wanted to be loved by a man – and did not go to the Nazi party meeting, or think about Hitler and inflation, or the struggle of my governemtn.

Instead I listened to her brief story. He mother had raised her gently, doing everything within her meagre means to enhance her physical beauty. Her mother had wanted to send her to Paris to marry a rich Frenchman or to become a fashion model. But her family did not have enough money to bring about these grandiose plans. When Bromsk became interested, her father forced her to marry him for his money. She told me that she had been in love with a young artist for whom she would have died. But he went to Bromsk to see what he could get. He got passage to Paris. "I should have known," she said. "An artist." Bromsk gave her father a fat annuity as payment for his agreement. Her misery was compounded because Bromsk treated her like a fine dog which one showed to dinner guests as a unique possession.

"Someday I will force him to see that I am a woman and that a woman needs things from a man." I told her not to let her vengeance hide her desire to escape or she would end up remaining behind with Bromsk just in order to punish him. It was not worth that.

We made love twice again that night. She told me how much she had always cared for me, and how she had never been able to show me. I told her that she could always look to me for comfort and the wind howled against the straining house. Finally, when our legs and arms were hot with sweat we slept.

I woke when I heard her car start. I ran to the window and saw the car speeding away down the narrow street. It was before dawn. It had rained while we slept. The wind had died and I remember the reflected light on the dark wet street that night.

Just before dawn I was roused from my bed by a hard pounding at my door. I opened it to Bromsk's valet, Ninski, who was a friend of mine. He rushed inside the room and put his back to the window and looked over his shoulder

Second honorable mention, Samuel Dibble Contest, 1973

into the empty street.

"You must hurry my friend," he said. "Put on your clothes and hurry. Bromsk's wife came to his bed last night and told him you made love to her. I was there and I heard her flaunt this and other things in his face." Ninski shook his head heavily. "Bromsk was in a rage. He ran up and down the house shouting, 'Let the bastard sleep, let the bastard sleep. I'll put him in prison tomorrow.' Just a little while ago he called his Nazi friends and told them he wanted you killed, that you were a Communist spy, a subversive, and had fooled him all this time. I was hiding behind the door and when he went away I came to you. They will come for you today."

I rushed to clothe myself. Taking only the clothes on my back, I went with my friend Ninski through the early morning streets to one of his friend's houses.

"Who is this man, Ninski? How is he your friend and not mine?" I asked him when we arrived at a house I did not know.

"I will fight the Nazis," he said. "I have new friends."

"Why do you help me? . . . I was a Nazi."

"I know your heart," he said, "We played together as children and both have our secrets, but I know your heart."

I was hidden in a cold basement behind some boxes for hours. I became hopelessly furious as I sat in that damp basement listening to the rats search for food. I looked for something on which I could vent my rage. I had a feeling of hopeless mediocrity. like the hungry rat, who knows better than to expect a free meal. I had been terribly wronged and had no one to whom I could appeal for justice.

Later a man came who told me his organization could offer two courses of action. I would be smuggled into the mountains of Yugoslavia where I could join a band for Czech independence, or I could make my own way through Yugoslavia into Greece where I could work for passage to another part of the world.

I travelled part of the way on foot and part of the way smuggled onto a train. There were just a few of us, and yet I never felt away from the world, as one does when one leaves something behind. There was always a sense of hovering danger. The only way I could be alone was to shut my eyes and try not to hear the rumble of the train – noises, sounds, sights – everything I didn't want to see or hear. For me, solitude was silence and darkness – I didn't want to see or hear.

And so I came to America from Greece. I suppose if I were younger I would concentrate on the adventurous aspects of my escape from Prague and my pilgrimage to America, but as I have grown older they do not seem as important to me. I never again heard of Bromsk, or Dorsna, or Ninski, or any of the people I knew then for I did not read the newspapers from the old country. That is why many people who come to this country think of America as something new. For so many of them, when they come here there is nothing left behind.

FOR 1976

A leading anthropologist:

The Washington Monument
's a phallic shrine.

(And I do not
doubt the immensity
of the thrust that
Fathered America)

The party-goers
gather; their cries of

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY"

titillate the shaft;
America braces and
awaits the coming.
(of age)

First prize, A.J.R. Helmus Poetry Contest, 1973

*

Walking consists of the laying
down of the foot as much
as the raising of it.
You see, I do have a
refined sensibility!
I've read Ayn Rand and
Meher Baba.
And, once I also puked when
I saw a woman giving birth.

IN DEFENCE OF LEAR

Upon my dark and frosty eyes
send forth
your gales of doubt –
gales of family unconcern
along some cavern route;
Upon my glazed and weary eyes
Blow!

Blow your chill
impartial breath,
Blow what careless gusts you dare
And I
shall merely let
a tear
tear untelling
tear untold
slip down
a blustered cheek.

LORD ALFRED'S DILEMMA

chanting,
chanting,
groaning lowly,
moaning:
'a new reality.'

plodding
trodding
manly prodded
(ass-head poet's journey)
burning palaces
(kingdom fallicy)
moaning for new reality

chanting,
chanting,
singing lowly,
proclaiming:
'A New Reality.'

WATCHING THE BLUE RIDGE

(for John Harrington)

i

Five windows wide, less than half a pane high,
The mountains tape the piedmont to the sky.

ii

From here they have been mistaken for clouds
From there we have been mistaken for clay.

iii

They are chameleon and inconstant:
Lilac, ageratum, muscadine.
Some days, no matter how long you stare,
They are not there.

iv

The mountains roll out of the tunnel of the woods
And in silence ride the skyline out of sight.

v

Before he had travelled beyond his back yard,
My son felt sure that in the mountains
All trees are blue.

vi

For us the mountains are like the moon:
  We know only one side
  And seldom think beyond.
It requires a conscious effort to recall
That Hollywood exists behind Hogback.

vii

Like us, the mountains came out of the sea.
But they remember that better than we.

viii

They lie as gracefully along the western horizon
As a woman's bare arm resting full-length on a table.

ix

Sandburg settled and tended goats.
Scott Fitzgerald came down to dry.
Thomas Wolfe grew up alone.
Sidney Lanier died breathing blue stone.

x

The sun, roughly the size of a quarter,
Slides out of sight between the mountains
  and the sky –
Sucked into that sometime sunset machine.

xi

When the corn is high
The mountains come closer.

FLYING BY

I wish I could say
what I really feel,
but I'm not so sure
that I could.
for it's hard to know
what's really real and
then again what's not.
at times I think
I'm in the know
but other times I'm not.
for feelings come
and feelings go
the same as girls
and flies.

(SEMI-MEMOIRS cont.)

The coach was not pleased. I could tell because his crew-cut seemed to bristle more than usual. Lined up with the other sophomores in the compulsory phys.ed. class, I tried to affect a more manly stance. I thrust out my chin, sucked in my gut and pointed my toes exactly parallel. He marched down the line, scowling like Jack Webb in the D. I. My left armpit itched, so I scratched it. Others, less inhibited, pawed their crotches, encased as they were in petrified jockstraps. I coughed, which was not unusual in the draughty gym. Coach didn't like to hear me cough. For some reason, he took it as an affront. "What's that supposed to mean, Allen?" he growled. "Nothing coach." "nothing is right. You trying to be funny?" "No coach." "No, huh? You think you can stand there in line and snicker at me and get away with it?" "I wasn't snickering coach. I coughed." "In a pig's ass! That's where you belong anyway. Paid any calls on sows that need it?" "No coach." "I'll bet. I'll tell you what you can do with your damned smart-ass Allen. You can take it and carry it around the gym. Let's see. I think ten laps around the floor would suit you. Then run up and down the steps another ten times. All the way. None of that sissy lagging. Work off that beer-belly." "How many did you say coach?" "Ten, you giggler. Let's see you laugh after that. Then come by my office when you're through." I did like the coach said. When he turned his back, however, I cut a little off his ordered number. He caught me once and made me do five extra around the gym. By the time I finished, I slunk to his office. I was the worse runner in the class, famous for finishing a good hundred yards behind the fattest on a mile run. I had a reputation of being the most incompetent at any game on the agenda, even making ping-pong seem like jai alai. Thus exhausted, I entered the office. I dripped sweat on his roll-list. "Well, Allen, some fun, huh? I bet you don't have enough wind left to laugh now do you?" "That's (gasp, gasp) about (gasp, gasp) right (gasp, gasp) coach." "Okay. Let's talk hard shit. You might not think I can read, being a coach and all. But let me tell you, smart-ass, I got my M. A. in Phys. Ed. And you a damn sophomore. I can read and I read that article you wrote for the paper last week." He referred to a tirade that lambasted the physical education and military science departments. Therein, I had derided the rule that allowed grades in phys. ed. to be counted in the GPR.

"That damn article was nothing but slander. If it wasn't in such a chicken-shit paper, I'd sue your ass." "But I didn't mention any names, coach," I gasped. "What the hell difference does that make? I've had a talk with the colonel and he agrees with me that you're downright un-American. You've never even took ROTC, how can you criticize it? I bet you're a dam draft-card burner. Are you? Let me see your draft-card." "But I don't have it, coach." "That's just what I mean. You know it's a law that you have to carry it on your person at all times." "But I bet you don't have yours," I countered. "I sure as hell do." He reached into his sweat-shirt and pulled out a chain. On the end of it was a draft-card laminated in plastic. "I even have it when I'm in the shower, " he said smugly. "But that's not what I called you here for. I wanted to chew it over with you face to face, not behind your back. I might not be able to write like you, and thank God for that, but I can talk man to man with anybody. That was a low blow. Why shouldn't your grade in P. E. count in your GPR? It's your over-all performance that shows up on it. Not just them fag subjects, like poetry. The only poet who was a man was Roodyard Kipper. He wrote "If" you know. By

God, if you'd read that, you'd be a better person. But tell me straight out why did you say what you did about what was it? Oh yes, fishing. You said that fishing should be graded, too if you get grades on ping-pong." "It was just an example, coach." "Well, it wasn't a good one. I'll tell you something about fishing. My father fishes a lot. So do I. You trying to say there's something wrong with me and my father?" "No, coach, that wasn't it at all. I was just trying to show how silly it is for me to get a low grade in this course and let it count against my better grade in something academic. There shouldn't be any credits for this or for ROTC either." "There you go again! Hell, a man should be a complete man, not just a brain on stilts. You'd like that, wouldn't you? You'd like it if we had something like chess instead of P. E. where you guys who think you know it all could get grades in it. Well, let me tell you. I'm pretty good at chess, and I bet I could beat your ass. And ROTC. It's good for your character. A person should get a grade on whether his buttons are polished and his shoes shined. If they did, you'd see a lot better bunch around here. I bet I haven't seen a shined shoe in the past two years, except in ROTC. That's about all I've got to say. And if you get an F in this course, I want you to know it's nothing personal. I don't do stuff like that." "Can I shower now, coach?" "Yeah, go ahead. But don't let me catch you playing with yourself. It'd better be jock itch."

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Through the murk of the darkened theater, I discerned the profiles of several Proctor notables as we all craned our necks to get a better view of the screen. I alone irreverently munched popcorn. The theater was showing, for some uncommercial reason, *Fellini Satyricon*. Thus, certain English professors and student film buffs populated the audience. I could see few, if any, local types unassociated with the college. In the middle of the calf-slaughtering scene, somebody nudged my shoulder. Looking up, I saw the pudgy figure of Wally Thomas. "This seat taken?" he asked, sitting beside me. "No," I answered, "Care for some popcorn?" He declined, with regrets. "What are you doing here?" I asked. "The same thing you are," he replied, "I like decadent societies. I hear there's some pretty good orgies and weird rites in this. Besides, I've read the book." Apprised of each other's motives, we sat back to gape at the action. Periodically, Wally would nudge me and emit high-pitched snickers of pleasure. The wedding scene between Encolpie and the pirate captain seemed to please him and when the two rogues stole the hermaphrodite, he grabbed my elbow in ecstasy. As the film ended, I glanced at him, only to discover an almost catatonic expression of delight on his face. "It's over," I noted. "Want to walk on back with me?" He reluctantly vacated his seat.

Outside, he chirped excitedly. "That was a great movie, John," he began. "Talk about genius. The marriage of Fellini and Petronius will live forever in filmic annals! Did you get the same feeling I did when they conducted the blasphemous rites over the effigy of Ceasar? Imagine! Those people actually believed in the divinity of their ruler. You couldn't get the same overtones of shock if you filmed some ungodly rites today. And the relationship between Encolpio and Giton. Reminds me of stuff right out of the *Jewel in the Lotus*." "What's that?" I asked. "You mean you aren't familiar with such a classic? It ranks with deSade at least. I thought you, of all people would know about a pornographic classic. Well, that's what it is. It gives instructions about attaining sexual bliss, but with infinite variation. Let me think. There's one method I

remember in particular, about shepherds. It seems that the lonely Greek shepherd, sated with normal congress with his ewes, came up with some neat little tricks. The shepherd would scoop a handful of honey from an amenable hive and dip his tool in it. Luckily, in most cases, no bee showed up to reclaim his product or it could have been rather sticky. Ha ha. Well daubed with the sweet stuff, the shepherd would take his favorite charge and encourage it to fellate him. Unfortunately, such revels would be virtually impossible today. The ASPCA would have the shepherd before the sheep could bleat twice."

By the time Wally and I returned to campus, I was scheduled to do my stint behind the circulation desk. He accompanied me. William sat with his boot-heels on display. "Ah, prodigal," he addressed me, "Welcome back. Sorry about the fatted calf." "A suckling pig will do." I said. "Get your ass back here!" William ordered. "Can't you see I'm understaffed?" "Hello, William, didn't recognize me with these smoked shades, huh?" Wally asked. "Thomas, I'd recognize you if you were up to your ears in shit. And to tell the truth, you wouldn't look any different than you do now." "Do me a favor, will you William," said Wally. "Get me the last issues of *Wintergreen* from behind there." "What? You mean to tell me, Thomas, that you drool over that porn rag like everyone else? I thought you had more developed tastes." During this debate, I had stationed myself at the typewriter and typed out a little piece of verse. "What do you think of this?" I asked, "It's fresh off the press. Thy tongue is like a lizard/and mine is like a snake/ and they both do seek/ in recesses without light/ a kind of bliss not found/ in mouth or ear or navel." "My god, must you? " William moaned. "If you think that's bad, listen to this," Wally interjected. "of what use/ is self abuse/ save when bereft/ of woman's cleft?" "Okay, okay," William admitted, "three can play at that game. There was a young vicar at Stoke/ who tried to administer a poke/ to his female parishioners/ till he found out the Bishop was/ already rehearsing his stroke." I sighed. Wally gave a raspberry. "What's so bad about that?" asked William defensively. "I did it from the top of my head." "You should have kept it there," Wally said drily. "Besides did I detect a certain animosity towards the clergy in that piece of drivel?" "Well you might," said William. "Didn't I tell you about my own brief ecclesiastical career?" "No," we both chorused. "If you candrag your minds from the gutter, for a while, you might learn something. I got out of Texas A&M a perfect little Aggie. Shoes shined, buttons polished, crew cut and absolutely no idea of what I was going to do. I had a sweater just like the old Lettermen used to wear and a 1957 T-Bird. Well, I thought I might go to grad school, you know, just hang around for a couple of years with a nice stipend and translate Old Norse sagas. Austin seemed like a comfortable place, so I accepted a job at Texas teaching English part-time and wondering about symbolism in *Alice in Wonderland.* It was a good life until I started having Philosophical Thoughts.

"That's something I should warn you about. Never have deep thoughts. You'll become a True Believer before you know it. I got mine from reading Kirkegaard. Then C. S. Lewis. The *Screwtape Letters* really flattened me. I decided then and there to do something important with my life. So I declared that Jesus was the answer. But I wouldn't take the kind of Jesus that haunted Texas. You know the kind, he's prospering around here. He always talk through semi-literates who can't teach for preaching and believe Revelations give the actual floor-plan for Heaven. I'm serious. They think that the streets are paved with gold because their own are paved with dirt. If you're poor on earth, you'll be a real nabob up there, with solid gold fillings in your resurrected body and go tooling around in celestial cadillacs. Well, as I said, I didn't want anything to do with that scene. I wanted an intellectual Jesus, one that was hip and relevant

and could understand Schoepenour. Harvey Cox invented the Jesus for me. Well, I naturally avoided the Southern Baptists and their ilk. The Methodists seemed a bit too gauch and the Episcopalians too precious. Well, what did I do but choose the Presbyterians. Good old John Knox suited me just fine. I liked predestination. Still do. A true son of John Knox, I thought. Give them the truth but be careful about how you pronounce it. I followed the usual route and got out of the seminary in a year or two. They assigned me to a little church in east Texas which was all right with me. The time came when I got to preach my first sermon. I was excited and wanted to knock them on their ears. So I avoided literalism, didn't even take a bible with me. What I did was, I went through a bunch of popular songs and picked out lyrics that seemed relevant. Then I got some quotes from Adlai Stevenson and Dag Hammarskjold about peace and that kind of stuff. Finally, I had some friends over to provide a little musical prelude, you know, strum a quiet folk-hymn on the guitar, that kind of thing. I didn't pay much attention to my congregation as I preached, I was so hipped out with the beauty of the message. I finished and went to the door to shake hands. Most of the people just passed by sheepishly and wouldn't look me in the eye. Then one old buzzard came up and accused me of doing devil's work. He claimed that when I quoted Bob Dylan, I quoted a fornicator! He said that he'd not listen to a fornicator praised within the walls of his church. That was all. He didn't comment on anything else. Just fornication. I knew that I'd have to face his kind every Sunday. There wasn't anything in C. S. Lewis or Chesterton about this. So I quit."

Wally stared with new respect at William upon hearing this story. "You're not putting me on?" he asked. "You really did take to the cloth?" "Indeed," William said, "and I've got the scars to prove it. I wish they gave out purple hearts for spiritual casualties. I'm sure we'd all have a breastful." "But this is a revelation!" Wally stammered. "I didn't think of it as quite so earth-shaking," William demurred. "But it is," Wally continued, "because a little hobby of mine is the metaphysical and this includes those who dabble in it. That's you." "Metaphysical?" William was excited. "Have you read Swedenborg?" "Have I read Swedenborg?" Wally echoed. "My god, was Chiram a Mason? Of course I've read him. Not to mention *The Book of the Dead, the Cabbala, The Golden Ass, The Mad Tryst of Sir Launcelot Cauning* and the *Metronomicon.* Had enough?" William chuckled. "At least I see that you've read Poe and H. P. Lovecraft. That's impressive. I must warn you, however, that you must be careful in what you read and how you apply it. Remember Dr. Dee?" "I don't," I said. "Would you illuminate me?" "I don't think we'd better," William winked, "let him die of curiosity, just like Faust." "I think we should tell him this," Wally volunteered, "that Dr. Dee was a 17th century English metaphysician who conducted experiments that led to his untimely disappearance. If you want to find out more, you'll have to contact the good doctor himself." "I don't think I want to," I said. "I know now why they burned witches. They were a public menace like you two, assaulting the public with such drivel that bored and harassed officials came up with a final solution." "You know something, John," Wally said, "If you weren't a snail in a previous incarnation, I bet you were right there with the rest of em piling faggots around the stake of Joan of Arc." "Well, at least I'm in good company," I said. "Shakespeare said she was a witch." "Ah, Joan of Arc," William sighed didactically, "she ran with a strange crowd. One of her most prominent and notorious supporters was Gilles de Ray, sometimes called Blue-Beard." "The wife killer?" I asked. "No. In point of fact he was a child murderer and a homosexual. There were a lot of children running around, you know the Children's Crusade and so forth, just easy pickings. When they finally arrested him, they discovered the dismembered corpses of hundreds of kids in his dungeon. Seems the chap had a taste for their blood as well as their bottoms." He stretched from his reclining position and hobbled towards the lounge. Wally tagged along, asking William to clarify passages from *The Golden Bough.*

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"Have you thought of how the birds make out?" asked professor Garrick. He interrupted his lecture on Romantic poetry with the speculation. "I've just been struck by this hilarious vision." We had been reading Shelley's "Ode to a Skylark". "I can just see it now," he chuckled, "two twittering little skylarks winging their way through Shelley's blithe ether and the urge hits them. Their hollow little bones are suddenly consumed with hot desire. Well, the boy budgie and the girl budgie see each other and know it's the real thing. So what happens? They wing their way toward each other in slow motion, like in Elvira Madigan. Then they meet! Instant bliss. Feathers float placidly to the earth and the little creatures are locked in each other's beaks. They hover for a while, unable to terminate their ecstasy. Then with a sad little wave of their wings, they fly off. A few weeks later, there's a nest filled with cute little speckled eggs. The cycle begins again." After class, I wandered to his office. There was something about Byron and Augusta Leigh that I wanted cleared up. "Dr. Garrick, what was the real situation between Byron and that woman he was accused of incest with?" Garrick formed a steeple with his fingers and peered at me gravely. Then in his stage-trained voice he said, "The real story, John, is that Gussie and Georgie didn't let the sheets get cold. And this was while all the other women on the continent were standing in line at the foot-board of his bed. There must be something about the forbiddeness of incest that really turned them both on. Byron was really a lover and probably wasted more energy on sex than on his poetry. As you know he was a public school boy." "No!" I looked surprised. "Indeed. And I'm sure you have no illusions about the standard of morality in English public schools of the time." His eyes were aglow. "Yes, with the fag system there was probably a rare boy indeed who emerged from Eton, Harrow, etc. without having shared a larger boy's narrow cot. It almost ruined Shelly. Bryon was reputed to have been the most sought after boy at school, what with his satanic good looks. And his club foot must have turned the perverts on." "You're telling me straight, aren't you?" I asked, stunned. "Of course. You see, these kind of things don't get into textbooks. If one compiled a history of the love lives of the Romantic poets alone, you would have something that *Wintergreen* would jump at to print." "Come, now, professor Garrick. Somebody like gentle old Wordsworth, he couldn't have been a freak, could he?" "Ah, Wordsworth. Lived with his sister all his life between her lucid moments. Killed their mother with a cheese knife, you know. And Carolina Lamb, a real nymphe. Poor old Coleridge, the Unitarian minister, I guess he alone didn't stick his poor tool where it didn't belong. But he was always so hipped out on opium, it didn't matter." Although consumed with curiosity, I found myself shocked into leaving. After all, how could I ever read S.T.C. again without thinking of a razor in a poppy?

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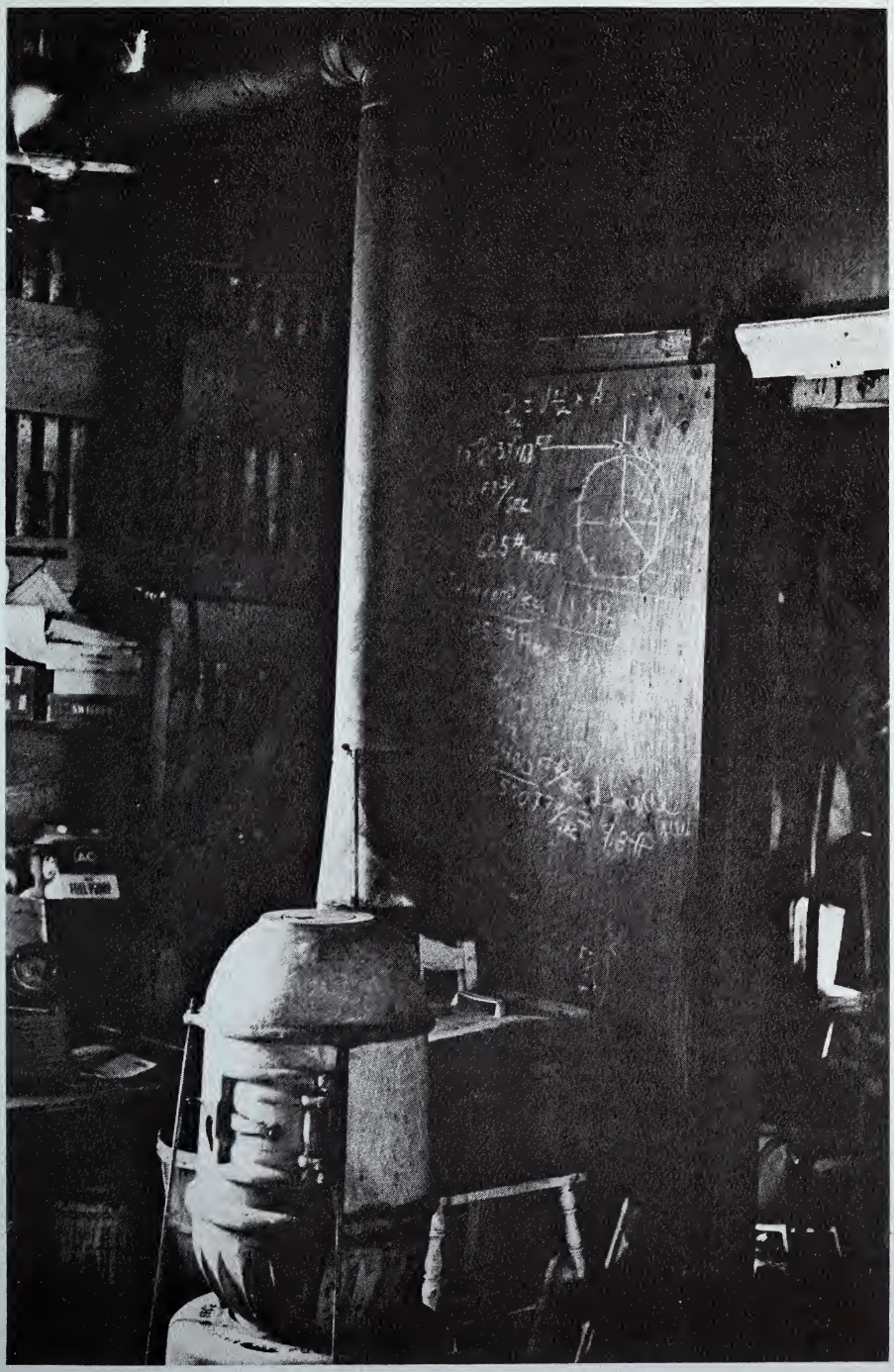
"Who do you have to fuck to get a drink around here?" Alex asked. "Me", Tim simpered. Tim did not wear on this occasion his clerical garb, and in fact was dressed in mufti. Five or six of the literary magazine staffers had been summoned to Tim's room for a party. Alec, as usual, was late. He had interrupted a snickering conversation which we were conducting about the film, *The Boys in the Band*. Prescient as ever, Alec uttered the tag-line upon entry. I was perched in a decaying wicker rocker equipped with, of all things, antimacassars. In my hand I held a coke, neat. The various other celebrants clutched concotions of bourbon, vodka or rum. For some reason, I had chosen to stand on principle as the lone abstainer. Tim's room-mate, Chuck, sat with a rum and coke. Abe Linz, the token jew, did not let his religion stand in the way of his thurst. At that time, Proctor had no token blacks. A couple of underclassmen, technically ineligible to drink anything other than beer, completed the assemblage. I was immediately



Third honorable mention, Samuel Dibble Contest, 1973

struck by the demeanor of one, Wally Thomas. Pudgy, and attired in a denim jacket, Wally punctuated the conversation with high-pitched giggles. I wonder if he had yet attained puberty. Nevertheless, I knew of Thomas from reading his efforts in the magazine. He promised to outstrip me, so I regarded him with mixed feelings. The other freshman was John Huw, whose distinguishing features were a pair of piercing blue eyes. They conveyed, despite this, all the probity of a hawk. John seemed to be the favorite of Tim, who prided himself in his ability to sniff out new talent.

My attention before Alec's entry had been riveted by Abe's fly. It was completely undone. I squirmed in my seat, trying to approach informing him with dignity. I finally unburdened myself with, "Abe, I don't know whether it's from neglect or pride, but your fly's undone." Without flinching, he replied, "I know, John. If it troubles you that much, I'll put my napkin over my lap." Everyone heard this exchange, which interrupted Tim's discourse on Joyce. "Let's not quibble," Tim lisped, "to each his own, you know." Alec had just gotten his second bourbon straight and began to peer at me. "What are you drinking, John?" he asked significantly. "A snifter of coke, Alec," I said archly. "Coke?" he said, appalled. "My good man, what do you mean, sitting here amongst this cornucopia of spirits, and presuming not to indulge?" I disdained an answer, as Alec was launched upon a dramatic monologue, his trademark. "Ah, yes. It saddens my soul to contemplate one who can refuse what Keats called a purple stained mouth. A beaker of Hippocrene? No. A flagon of ambrosia? Not a chance. A cup of the South's only worthwhile product, bourbon? He says no. He sits there with a glassful of the most execrable, most insipid, most puerile liquid imaginable. Coke! What's your excuse? Come, come, it better be good."

Applause greeted the completion of this philipic. I sat mute, the coke still getting flat in my hand. "Now, now, Alec, don't get carried away." Tim advised. "After all, there might be deep moral reservations which John believes in." "That's right," volunteered Wally Thomas, "some people don't believe in birth control." To illustrate his point, he opened his wallet and pulled out a condom. "I wonder if it still fits," he said wistfully. "I agree," said Abe, "have you ever seen me eat a ham sandwich?" Chuck and Huw nodded. Struck by an inspiration, Alec asked, "Now, let's see, John, I think I'm getting something. You wouldn't be a member of the notorious local sect which condemns fun, namely the Southern Baptists?" I looked glumly into my coke. "Aha! So it's true! Tut, tut, man, don't deny your faith. By the time I crow three times, own up or be damned." With that, Alec began a chorus of cockle-doodle-doos. "All right! All right, Alex! You've wrung it from me, I knew I couldn't fool you. But I'm a nomial Baptist." "That's the only kind in existence," Alec pronounced, "and I just wanted to make sure you weren't an incorrigible alcoholic." Somewhat shaken by Alec's accusation, I turned to Tim. "Do you remember these psychological forms we had to fill out when we were freshmen?" He nodded. "There was a section which asked all sorts of religious questions, you know, like do you believe you're the reincarnation of Mary Magdalene?" Tim confirmed my recollection with another nod. "Well, there was one question that was the keystone. It asked if you believed in the Second Coming. I said yes. What did you say? Tim gave a Mona Lisa smile. After a moment of reflection, he said, "Of course I said yes, John." "Now that this little eschatological controversy has been resolved," Alec announced, "let's get on to a more propos topic. Upon my entry, I noted that the conversation was concerned with the film, *The Boys in the Band.* I'm sure you all read my review in the paper. Dare anyone quibble with my conclusions?" Thomas farted. While Alec responded, Tim passed me the crackers. "Want any cheezy-weezy on your crackers?" he referred to a product which squeezed out like tooth-past. "Thanks, Tim. But give a pickle, will you?"

You "maintain an excellent sideboard," Alec told Tim. "We aim to please." Tim replied. "You know what would make you the perfect host?" asked Alec. "I can't think of anything else," Tim decided. "Well, I'll tell you. You need one of those novelty aprons which you can order from a cheap-jack mail-order house. You know, the kind of place that sells ceramic pissing jockeys and rosary beads with snow inside. Well, Tim, you could use one of those aprons emblazoned with I'M NOT DRUNK, I'M ALWAYS LIKE THIS and other gems like SHOW ME A MAN WHO DOESN'T DRINK AND I'LL SHOW YOU A CORPSE. heh, heh. Tim, if only you had such a garment, you would out madam Perle Mesta. With your girth, you would put a smile on the face of the most hard-bitten teetotaler like John." Tim made a face, but quickly composed his features in a suitably grave attitude. "This is all very amusing, Alec, but the real purpose we're here for is to engage in literary conversation. In fact, I can see some of our party clutching what appear to be manuscripts. I fail to see such a token in your hand, however." "That's because I don't have one. I'm a proseur, not a poet you know. If I carried my manuscripts about like they do, I'd need a wheel-barrow. But I'm fully prepared to engage in criticism." "Aren't you always?" said Tim. "Remember what Brenda Behand said about critics: They are eunuchs who enjoy commenting on something they themselves can't do. But of course this doesn't apply to you." Tim asked for somebody to begin and nobody did. Sighing, he read his own poem in his Truman Capote voice. It is about the plight of the artist in a Philistine America. Everyone applauded the sentiment. Alec, however, suggested, "Wasn't the bit about his paintings selling like Kentucky Fried Chicken a bit banal?" "Not really," Tim purred, you just missed the point, Alec. I was trying to show banality through using the banal. His patrons were so many Babbitts, you see, and I was expressing their attitude." Alex sighed and sipped his fifth bourbon. Tim entreatied another person to read, so I scratched my ear in assent. I read a poem about a dead insect, a tragic butterfly. At first, I thought nobody perceived the metaphysical implications. Huw mumbled, "Yeah, I think I get reality of the modern world. Clover paved over." Others murmured agreement. "But it's so fragile," hissed Alec, so much like a Watteau water-color." Abe and Chuck read theirs and Huw's turn came. He said that he had forgotten his manuscript, but he could recite from memory. He launched upon an allegory in which spacemen came to earth with peaceful intent, but had to get off the planet and in so doing, carried the evils of humankind back to their own spheres which led to their planet's demise. They left on earth, however, something Huw called happy dust. "Sounds great to me," said Alec, "where can I get some?"

Wally Thomas, his condom back in his hip pocket, began to recite his effort:

"the monody of Man
I want to hold it
as I lie sweating in
no man's land
I'm tired of solitary masturbation
by the id of Zeus
to flaunt the empty skies with anethemas
that stood amongst the empty caves
creeping in diligent silence."

"Solitary masturbation exhaust you, huh?" asked Alec. "I doubt if you can find a partner in this room." "With the possible exception of yourself," Wally smiled. The reading and listening redoubled everybody's thirst, so Tim handed around another set of drinks. My coke still intact, I declined. To look busy, I dug out my pipe and lighted it. "What's that odor?" asked Wally. "Smells like dried camel dung." "I've smelt better," winked Abe. "You go about sniffing camel dung?" Tim coyly asked. "I know what he means," Huw piped, "something a

bit more potent, huh? Don't you have anything nestling between the eggs in your fridge, Tim?" Tim made elaborate shushing gestures and said eagerly, "Something between my legs? Of course, but not in the fridge," "Yeah," said Abe, "how about some nice rolled gold?" "Please, please," Tim demurred, pointing at me, "the only rolled gold I have is in my cufflinks." I sat perplexed at this dumbshow. Before I could enquire further, Tim screeched. He actually screeched, an unsettling habit on first encounter. "What's the matter," asked Wally, "did your crucifix bite you?" "The liquor! It's gone. A minute ago, there were three bottles on that table and now they're all gone." A general alarm ensued. We looked under the couch and beneath pillows, to no effect. Somebody discovered that Alec was flown as well. And the door to Tim's room was closed. Tim tried it only to find it locked. Suddenly, sounds emanated from behind the door. "Drink to me only with thine eyes and I will die of thirst," a voice sang. "All men are but
life's but a poor player. Get thee, to a nunnery go, Desdemona. Thy handkerchief is full of snot, oh Moor of Venice." "Alec, Alec, this is Tim," said Tim. "Do you hear me Alec?" "Uneasy lies the bear that crowns the head," Alec persisted. "For life I give my honor and for death I'd die a coward. The day is dying of sobriety and the moon also rise with a shot-gun in his mouth. God grant me the capacity to hold what I can and the wisdom to never know when I've had enough. And where wisdom fails, we are but boys with wanton flies." "Come on out Alec," Tim coaxed, "you're among friends." He tried the lock again without success.

"What's he doing in there?" Abe asked. "He sounds like he's swimming in a giant cocktail." "How much liquor did we have left?" Chuck asked Tim. "I don't know. About half a bottle of everything, except bourbon, which Alec drank before his incarceration." "Why don't we get him a beer chaser?" Wally asked. "This is serious!" Tim screamed. "Do you know how much all that booze cost me? If Alec swills the whole lot, what'll I do for my afternoon pick-me-up?" "I've got an idea," Huw said. "Why doesn't one of us go outside and sneak in through the window?" "Great," said Wally, "but I hereby disqualify myself and Tim for obvious reasons." He patted his pudgy belly. As Huw turned out to be the thinnest of the lot, he was dispatched to do the job. Meanwhile, Tim continued to beat on the door. "Who desires entrance to the castle of the thane?" Alec yelled. "The gate-keeper asks. I am Cerberus. Throw me a bone and I'll lick your face. Throw me a steak and I'll lick your ass. Woof. Woof. We're out of champagne? Send the cupbearer for another magnum. Ah, ganymede, my jewel, come kneel by my chair and let me run my fingers through thy silken locks. Honi soit qui mal y pense! Sauve qui peur! Merde on me, will you?" Tim knelt at the keyhole. "My god!" he gasped. "Alec's sprawled on the floor with the bottle of rum and he's drinking it in one swallow. That's the last of it. What's he doing now? He's got a match. He's breathing on it. Does he think he can light it with his breath? Wait a minute! I see a foot. It's Huw. He's stepping on Alec. Wait a minute, he's opening the door." At that point, the door indeed came open. We all rushed inside. Alec lay as Tim had reported. His inert form reeked. Chuck and Wally grabbed his form and pulled him into a sitting position. "Unhand me, knaves!" Alec slurred. "Bardolph! Pistol! My blade! Your butt reeks of malmsey, Tim." "Get him to the bathroom quick!" Tim commanded. Several of us clutched Alec and dragged him into the hall. "Thank god," Tim said, "he didn't puke all over my persian hooked rug. But what's this? Oh no! He's spilled liquor in my chalice, my communion chalice. He's been drinking from it. Blasphemy. Oh well." Tim's lament was interrupted by the sound of prodigious retching from the bathroom. A few moments later, Alec staggered back to our midst. A most amusing party," he addressed Tim, "sorry I can't stay. I've developed the most atrocious headache. A bientot."

MET HIM PIKE HOSES

milk log
lady lies heavy
green rumors
of once having hid
among fidgety girls
herself in drab dress-
green streak body rumors

milk log lady
lies full and heavy
curious and admiring
leaf and leaf
and citizen squirrels
survey the scene and carry
the gossip home
oohhyesssyessssyessss
achild achild achild

milk log lady lies
breathing
deeply
long after conception
long before birth
long now trees stand round
like big dumb boys
ssseeerr ssseerrrrrr

First prize, Samuel Dibble Photography Contest, 1973

TURNTABLED: A YOULOGY

Oh dear dear brother of time and all that
remember, O.K., when we thought it all
such really fun to pull the legs off grassy greenhoppers
just for the oh what fun it is to of it
and also rewaybackwhenber how you rennethed, having learned
it was crool and not nice, how it was evening more fun?

Also, and can't you memoree play
all the mellifluous girthquaking HAW HAW HAWs at them
cripple funnies and reetard polioloco jockles
with your legless, blind en(his)cyclopedieyed siblingo for
second base and how thow (brown cow) 'artily wasp enlightinged
at how base sick humor was?

And I can broadly rechannelcast in my mind's
three-color maytrikme imaginary orthicon viddiscreen, the odious
seens of Xtassee from that sinnymagrapic flip
allegory, nichtmoron of Anthorny Burgers
and how we gehowlt like the fool loona at the
horrorshow hilarity and melted like hot marshmellows
during the razor tense dramamine.

Why only last weak you announced your want
of disembowelling that nazty, crool, old grahzney Pilchard Noxin
for drooping flaming jellybabies in Veet Napalm

So now time and all has caught up and hrun over ewe
in a garbage trook and has bugged your ice out
like tubepaste underfoot and left you ruining along in the gutter
like technicolor overcooked cabbage (color by Detruxe or
Pathe'tick)
and I gaggle a bit and I con, O' scope, image how you must
half enjoyed hit.
So now I can last best and longest . . . hatchooo!

WAITING – A TRUCKSTOP POEM

Second prize, A.J.R. He

two o'clock
threw its self on the floor
and was ground into the linoleum.
just another hour like before,
    marble-eyed men slumped
    spellbound through country-twang guitars
    and expresso coffee
    Waiting –
for their beans (jumping mexicans)
red, blue, yellow.
Highways –
        double yellow streamers
        white band-aid strips
        S's and X's, no U's
        Waiting –

mountains like lumpy pudding
are spread beneath asphalt sheets.
Plowed Driven between the fingers
of hack-drivers.
        Greasy burgers and O-nuts
        roll through. Ammonia paint.
        Disguised prophets:
        scraping grime
        from their fingernails

Waiting –

RELEASE

she hovers in the jaws of winter
pausing to test the teeth
tiptoes with care to the edge
and
    swaying gently,
presses probing,
            tentative, quivering fingers
around to the key
where
        (wound down from the long stretching s
she winds herself up again
                to spring.

SIRENS

mountain dreaming
covers itself
with top sheet
metal mirrors blind
roof
of valley house warms itself
as olive eyes inside
sweating passion pupils
grease paper waxed windows

now the ax
now the tree
now the kettle
now the coon's gone
lickety-split
over the hill and
through the dalmation bearing
fire engine
we might save our mountain
home from the flames

VIA MAIL, No. 2

Oh shit
Mom and Dad are in the bathroom
watching tv
She filling up (almost overflowing) the tub
with herself.
He, lizard-lidded, poured into an armchair
where the toilet should be
And how
can I take a shower —
inandout inand out
but no help as
the wall is color flashing
and the faucet may self-destruct in five seconds
Mom and Dad may
too.

FIRST LOVE

It all began on Sunday night. I was walking to the beach to get some fresh air when I came upon this person walking down the road. As I came nearer I could see it was a girl with long brown hair. I walked up to her and asked her where she was going. When she turned around to answer me she smiled with dimples in her cheeks. She said she was going to the beach and so off we went. She had baby blue eyes and when she talked she smiled.

We got to the beach and began walking, no where in particular, just walking. We talked about things in general, you know, some serious things, some not so serious things and some down right silly things. Everything she said was like music. She spoke as soft as a children's choir singing in perfect harmony without the organ playing – every letter and word to perfection. She never got angry and she never spoke loud, just loud enough to hear her. When she spoke I had a funny feeling in my stomach.

Later as I walked her home I felt like I had a new friend and maybe something more. I wasn't sure at the time what it was. As she left me she smiled and asked me to meet her again the next night.

Well, the next night I met her and we headed for the beach again. This night was a little different from the first night. We both liked each other better and as we walked we held hands. You remember the feeling you got the very first time you held hands, a sort of scared feeling, but a secure feeling at the same time. That funny feeling was moving from my stomach to my throat.

The beach was just like you see it in a movie or read about it in a book romantic. The moon was full and it reflected on the ripples of water as the waves splashed to the shore. There was a soft breeze that blew her hair and to me she looked too wonderful to describe – like a goddess. We walked from the water to the sand dunes and several nightcrabs jumped up and fled from us and we chased one into a hole. We fell on our knees and tried to dig it out. We dug and dug for at least an hour. We laughed and threw sand on each other and had the best time – it was really sort of silly – but we were so involved in catching that crab that we just didn't think about how funny we probably looked. Right when we got to the bottom of the hole the crab ran between us and we fell on each other diving at it. When she touched me the feeling moved from my stomach to my throat. I almost choked. The crab got away, but that memory will never escape my mind as long as I live. It was getting sort of late then, so I walked her home. She told me to meet her the next day and we could mess around and go swimming or something. When I saw her I felt the feeling in my throat. This time I couldn't speak. Her bathing suit fitted her perfectly. It was a bright yellow two piece and it set off her figure. It'll be a long time before I forget that bathing suit, too and you can believe that.

The next morning I went to her house and she was waiting on me. I had a bright red bucket with a red shovel so we could build a sand castle on the beach and she had a picnic basket. Off we went; hand in hand to the beach. It was early in the morning and the tide was low. There were shells and starfish and little dead fish washed up on the beach. The sun sparkled on the wet sand and the waves crashed to shore. We spread our gear and began to build our sand castle. We felt like kids – building a sand castle on the beach – isn't that something? We worked hard on the castle and ended up all muddy so we decided to take a dip. The water was pretty warm, because by this time the sun

was directly overhead, and the tide was coming in. After swimming for five or it might have been fifty minutes, when you felt like I did time flies, we ran to the picnic basket and ate all of the fried chicken and chocolate cake. Actually I did most of the eating. I remember she only ate half of a drumstick and I tried to force her to eat more, but she wouldn't, she just blushed and turned her head. The afternoon went by and the further the sun sunk into the sea, the more I knew we had a special relationship.

The afternoon went slowly by and we were silent. Silence is golden and now I know why. Once I turned to look in her eyes and then it hit me. I knew why I felt so funny and why there was a lump in my throat. I was in love. It's easy to see why. Here by my side was (to me) the most beautiful speciman of the human race I had ever laid my eyes on. She was so perfect I thought maybe I had died, gone to heaven, and she was the angel the Lord provided to take care of me. Her long brown hair, her soft blue eyes, and the dimples in her cheeks – everything I had dreamed about. The only word in the english language I know that could describe my feelings would be – esctasy. Total, complete esctasy. I knew she felt the same way about me. I thought I might not ever get to heaven, but if I always had this goddess beside me I wouldn't have to wait until I died to be in heaven for as long as she was with me, I was in heaven.

My heart stopped beating and as I looked at her and she looked at me I could feel the forcefulness of our love. Chills ran up and down my spine for fifteen minutes. Can you believe it, for fifteen solid minutes? Somehow the word "love" had a brand new meaning for me. There is no way to describe it. Everything I said was about love, peace, and tranquility and I couldn't make up my mind whether I was in heaven or whether just a small part of heaven had come down to earth to visit me. Then she led me to the sand dunes and picked a handful of sea oats. She placed them in my hand and kissed me. She started whispering softly into my ear slowly at first and finally by the time she finished she was crying softly, "Bubba, tomorrow I have to go home. My vacation is over and I have to leave."

"I know", I told her, "I knew from the beginning it would have to end." My heart was pumping a hundred miles an hour and tears flowed down from my eyes. Even now as I write this story my eyes swell up with tears.

When I think of my "little goddess" and of all the times we had I don't cry because she's gone, I cry because I know she'll be back next summer, and next summer when she returns I'll be waiting. We'll be two even more in love because mother told me that next summer I can stay out an hour later because ten year olds are a lot more grown up than nine year olds.

Winner of W. L. Pugh Short Story Contest

RESOLVING THE RACE QUESTION IN NEW ORLEANS, 1969

This searching after strophes
must stop. There are
three outlets; there is this
creeping like some haunted
thing looking at every parted
blade shaking the hidden
daggers out;
in this case it is
impossible to accept the trust
of the color alone
of grass; the pigment is
analyzed.

There is the outlet of trusting
colors alone — colors that shine like
electrical flares. Like the
sweat on smooth muscles;
there is no difference between
black and white when
both rise and fall on the current
of the Missippi as it
lifts barges they clean
under sun. Both alike sharing
the grand mistress.

(And yet my professor there
tells me the trusting is
shallow. There is a depth of
evil of malice of good of
things deeper than the
eyes themselves.)

Sweet odor of decay
sweet odor of rotting wood
the river that like rain
lulls to sleep eats into
the wood fibers of every house

blocks away the moss
hears its ripple, sways in
time. That is all
that moves. St. Charles
Avenue the streetcars have
no passengers. The seals in
Audubon lie under water
in their pool, the peanuts
float on top.

When summers stretch
interminable and sweet after
rain the sweetness
of hay of honey some unknown
incense rising late July, its
wisps — the moss, the park.

Lake Ponchartrain away its bridge
like an obsession will not swerve but
straightway holds no promise, only
the horizon from the middle;
the pines of Mississippi are
far away.

And I, burnt black and blind
grasp the rail, sliding the shovel with me
down the side, slowly,
roll the red-veined whites of the eyes,
smile the red inside of the lips
showing;
My neck is out there
the isthmus,
the knife across makes
a clean cut
a smooth canal.

never being what you
thought it would be

Love is like finding
forgotten toys
and knowing
they'd best be left untouched
in those dim recesses of childish joy

Love is like an iron sculpture
rusting and evaporating
into nothingness
leaving a bare patch
where grass green-golden
may whisper common thoughts
not so secret,
to the sunlight
one day not so far away.

Love is like a mirror pond
reflecting the blue sky
and a young man wading there,
growing wings that look like fins,
leaping into the stilled space
devoid of ripples and clouds
discovering all things
were himself reflected

Love is like a poem with no title,
that points the way
and worships no false idols

THE SAGA OF THE SOGGY CORNFLAKE

We were a new breed of cornflakes, born to conquer those countless bowls of milk across the nation. We were the product of years of technological research, hours of testing, and thousands of dollars in taxpayers' earnings. Our only goal was to stand up to milk and stay as crunchy as ever.

Finally, our day of truth was at hand. "Hey Kell," cried my friend Oggs, "you ready?" "I'm as ready as I'll ever be!" I replied.

Suddenly milk was everywhere: in our eyes, noses, and ears. My friends were gagging and choking as the waves rolled over them. A huge spoon dipped into the bowl and carried away a mouthful of valiant cornflakes. The verdict was in: Soggy again . . . .

Cows of the world, rejoice.

WALKING IN A PARK

Third prize, A.J.R. Helmus

It's not often one runs across
a water fountain of vanilla ice-cream
(with chocolate fudge twirl),
But when one does !!!
Needless to say, I
was not one to refuse
such a treat
I press the cherry button, and
up, up, up
comes the
sweet, sweet, sweet-water
Gurgle-ling from the peppermint faucet
And doing somersaults and back-flips
before coming down.
I capture some in my mouth
and swirl it around:
Swish, swish.
Swish, swish.
Down to the depths of my throat,
up to the roof of my mouth.
Under my tongue
and out to my lips
(which makes me look as if I'm going to kiss a beautiful lady).
Suddenly I leap
up so high,
head held back
and
Out, out, out
I squirt my precious liquid.
Summer-salts and back-flips,
becoming tiny love-sparkles
and
carried by fairy breezes
over all the land,
Turning everyone into handsome princes and beautiful princesses.

RATUCAMESS, OR APPLES AND PEACHES MAKE PIES, I THINK

At the strangest times
Life seems to be insignificant.
It's not that I'm knocking it, mind you.
But that dreary feeling always manages
To creep into everything that we do.

Like right in the middle of a good screw,
Or watching Saturday Night at the Movies on NBC

I find myself wondering where it's all leading me.
Then when I realize that I could
                Take my life,
and end it all.
I remember that I'll be
A senior next fall.

PEOPLE IS LIKE CEREAL IS

People is like cereal is
better with sugar and milk
                like cereal is
Sweet people is better
than unfrosted and plain
                like cereal is
When you pour on that milk of human kindness
people is so happy they crackle to life
                like cereal do
Sometimes there is special things in people's lives
like love and bananas and fruit
that makes them really special
an' makes them a joy to taste
                like cereal is
But if you don't enjoy the flakes
and they sit on the shelf, uneaten –
that cereals bound to get stale my friend,
much like people does.

First honorable mention, Samuel Dibble Photography Contest, 1973

HEAR IT

To hear is
    seeing silence
When it flashes by
My deaf eyes.

To know it's there,
            I hear it.
The whole world does
            I think.

Silence would be real
if it
    were
So hear
        It.

VIA MAIL, No. 1

And who will pray for me?
Not that fat-cheeked, rosy
gargoyle in flight,
the caricature of a cherub in
    slick and ancient
    Renaissance oils,
Who is a hunter always
    with twang
piercing and slashing a heart,
(But my words only).
Forever on tiptoes,
    we reach for the arrow
    plunging it in, embedding it.
Saint,
    teach us instead
to be arrows,
    velvet-tipped and gliding graceful
    strong and straight and feather-swift
    as if always
            just released.

LONG WIRES, SHORT CIRCUIT

Saturday night
the phone rings
down the miles
of concrete corridors:

it was never answered
it was never answered
it was never answered
it was never answered
" " " "
" " " "
" " "
" "
"

A POEM

I will build
a new house:

I will hack
each old piece
of furniture into
unidentifiable parts;

I will hurl
each part
(splintered dextrously)
into the sea's womb
and hope
for its return as
a (yelping) piece
of driftwood; driftwood
suckled by each wave.

And I will gather
this driftwood.

First prize, A.J.R. Helmus

"NEXT QUESTION"

"Next question."
"Yes?"
"What did you do after the time
You were a boy and before the time
You were a man?"
"I went to college."
"Where?"
"In South Carolina, at a men's school."
"Why?"
"Because the springs were so nice.
Florida is better.
And when it would rain on
All those white dogwoods
And pink or flame-colored azaleas,
The growing things with all their color would look
Like a beautiful gowned lady drenched in a sudden downpour.
And when the rain quit and there was just wet,
Everything would look and smell so swampy,
So gray and dreary and hopelessly pretty.
The dogwoods looked like they were littered through the woods,
Scattered by a generous god."
"Where did you do there . . . in Carolina?"
"I listened to a lot of Chopin waltzes."
"Why Chopin?"
"Because I would wake up at three a.m.
And look at the moon bouncing off my mirror
Into my face from the other side of the room,
And I couldn't exactly play Wagner
Because the fellow next door would pound on
The wall for me to cut it off.
He was a football player.
So I looked amongst my possessions
And found this Chopin record someone had
Given me at a party because I said,
'Of course, 'I liked him, and thought to myself,
'Did you think I was a churl?'
But I never listened to it till then."

"Why did you wake up at three a.m.?"
"Because of something Thornton Wilder
Said that I read somewhere, but I can't
Remember what it was now. And I never
Read anything by him
Except something in early prep school
I hated because it was almost summer."
"Is that all you accomplished at college?"
"No."
"What else, then?"
"I later listened to some Chopin etudes."
"Yes?"
"Yes."
"Next Question."

THE RAZZLE DAZZLE

They flash the world before us,
Stripped of any pastel tint.
And we devour the shock of a world
that's whole, unbroken, unbent.
We can shape the air around us
in our frosty, crystalline breath.
Tell the life electric and
laugh at the meekness death.

We leave no shadows behind us.
The world will conform to our ways,
and shake in the wonder and wake
of our razzle-dazzle days.

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